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# SHORT STORIES

FOR CLASS READING

EDITED BY

RALPH P. BOAS

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH  
MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

AND

BARBARA M. HAHN



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## PREFACE

THE formation of an enduring habit of reading is rightfully placed high among the aims of the modern English course. Probably no other activity of the English class can do more toward attaining this purpose than the reading of well chosen short stories and their discussion and study in class.

The stories in this collection are largely contemporary. While each has been selected first of all because it has obvious points of contact with the interests of the average student, no story has been accepted that does not possess, in addition, qualities of lasting worth. Since there has been at the same time a conscious striving to bring together stories of widely diverse types, this enduring merit is not present in each story in similar form. In one it may pertain to beauty of style, in another to the fundamental humanity of the theme, in others to the brilliance of the plot technique, and in yet others it is found in the skill with which the characters are drawn. In the collection as a whole it is believed that students will find the glamor of their own day, with here and there a glimpse of those bitter shortcomings that make this world less than perfect but that throw into bold relief its richer aspirations.

The introduction, questions, biographical notes, and bibliography are all purposely brief. They are in no case intended as an end in themselves, but rather as

helps in building up an increasingly discriminating and critically appreciative audience for the better and better short stories now being written.

At the beginning of each story acknowledgment is made for its use, but no such statement can express the editors' appreciation of the generous coöperation accorded them by authors and publishers.

R. P. B.  
B. M. H.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vii
A USE FOR CLODS . . . <i>Ben Ames Williams</i> . . .	I
WHITE BIRCHES . . . <i>Temple Bailey</i> . . .	22
THE DESPOILER . . . <i>Gouverneur Morris</i> . . .	50
VAN BIBBER AND THE SWAN BOATS . . . <i>Richard Harding Davis</i> . . .	66
THE GIFT OF THE MAGI <i>O. Henry</i> . . . . .	71
THE CLEAREST VOICE . <i>Margaret Sherwood</i> . . .	79
THE OLD PEARL NECK- LACE . . . . . <i>Mary Valentine Stanley</i> . . .	91
THOSE SCARS . . . . <i>Katharine Holland Brown</i> . . .	100
RENFREW AND THE NEW GENERATION . <i>Booth Tarkington</i> . . .	121
THE FAT OF THE LAND <i>Anzia Yezierska</i> . . . .	154
THE LITTLE SILVER HEART . . . . . <i>Iosephine Daskam Bacon</i> . . .	185
HUMORESQUE . . . . <i>Fannie Hurst</i> . . . . .	207
AS A BIRD OUT OF THE SNARE . . . . . <i>Dorothy Canfield</i> . . .	249
TWO FOR A CENT . . . <i>F. Scott Fitzgerald</i> . . .	266
MOTIGUJ—MUTINEER <i>Rudyard Kipling</i> . . .	288
THE STRANGE FLOWER <i>Edwina Stanton Babcock</i> . . .	298
THE DOLL'S HOUSE . <i>Katherine Mansfield</i> . . .	326
BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS . . . . .	337
A LIST OF SHORT STORIES . . . . .	360



## INTRODUCTION

### HISTORY OF THE SHORT STORY

IF one wishes to trace the history of the short story in detail, it is possible to go back to the building up by each race of its own group of myths, such a body of mythology as Homer found ready to his hand when he set about the telling of his *Iliad*. Most of us, however, are satisfied to note the beginnings of the short story in the Middle Ages. The first forerunners of this form were tales in verse sung by minstrels of the twelfth century in France. Sometimes the medieval short story appeared as the *Contes Devots*, tales of piety; sometimes as fairy stories borrowed by the French from the Celts. Such stories were called *Lais*; the best of those which remain to us were collected by Marie de France.

In Chaucer's time, the fourteenth century, the short story began to take on some of the qualities which it still retains. In this and the following century a number of different types of stories were called *fabliaux*. These were tales of common people in situations at once gross and grotesque. In spite of obvious inelegance and coarseness, this type of story possessed an amazing vigor and realism. From Chaucer and his *Canterbury Tales* with their marvelous pictorial fidelity to the color and pageantry of medieval life, come our best examples of the true *fabliau*. There were numer-

ous other medieval forms, such as the *exemplum*, which originally was a pithy pointed anecdote intended to illustrate the elaborate sermon of the day. But as men grew interested in collecting these stories, they in a measure forgot the alleged intent of the anecdotes and gathered into their collections any brief story that pleased them by reason of its wit or wisdom. These collections, once purporting to be handbooks of morality, grew eventually to be entirely secular in character, as for instance Gower's *Confessio Amantis* which followed the general plan of a handbook of morality, but was, in reality, a dissertation on love.

After Chaucer, the next important development of the short story came in the eighteenth century, when the growing rise of popularity of periodicals such as Addison and Steele's *Spectator* offered an opportunity as well as an incentive for producing brief narratives. Much of the material published in this century was essentially non-fiction; nevertheless some of it contained the germs of technical devices which were much later to be capitalized by the short story. Two of these might be briefly mentioned, because later they each were developed into a popular type of short story. These were the story with an obvious moral, and the loosely constructed narrative or essay in which is reproduced with mirror-like fidelity the manners and temper of the times.

The first modern short stories were written by Frenchmen,—de Maupassant, Daudet, Merimée, and Coppée.

As these authors developed it, the short story had certain distinct characteristics that set it off from a



novel or tale. It differed from the novel in that the plot was simpler, more forceful, and of quicker action; its characters were fewer and of less complex natures; its situations, not only fewer, but of more elemental and vital type. At its best they considered it the story of one character, in one situation, and in so far as possible, limited to one time. Thus in ideal it approached the dramatic unities of the old Greek tragedians. In the hands of the skillful it became a tool of remarkable force through this same stark simplicity. De Maupassant's *Piece of String* is an excellent example of this type of story, as is also *The Substitute*.

From France it spread to England and to America, where Edgar Allan Poe produced a new type of story that, together with the work of the French writers and of Robert Louis Stevenson, was to dominate the American short story to the day of O. Henry. For those qualities which are generally academically approved, the stories of Poe's two contemporaries, Hawthorne and Irving, are to be greatly admired. Each followed tradition rigorously; each wrote with a precision and elegance that is the despair of imitators. Neither of them, however, excelled in the matter of portraying or inducing emotion. In this respect as well as in others, Poe was a consummate master. Those who find in his

"The glory that was Greece  
And the grandeur that was Rome"

the two most poignant lines in English poetry know that this majesty of expression was not reserved for his poetry alone. His prose had a ringing beauty that

was all the more evident in an age of lengthy and often awkward sentences. His plots, and his manner of telling a story so that every sentence was a well-defined step to an inevitable and dimly perceived end, had the terrible beauty of fatalism. It is not perhaps important to attempt to decide whether America and Poe gave or received more from France in the matter of developing the short story.

The short story has become the most popular literary form of the present century. There are to-day written and published more short stories in the United States than in all the rest of the world put together. Second to the output of the United States is that of England. In Russia and Scandinavia the form has excited interest and has been written with vigor and force, but never with the frequency that has distinguished it in America. The Russian short story has been characterized by much the same kind and degree of pessimism and gloom as that which pervades the novels, and, in fact, the life of the great mass of Russian people. The Scandinavian short story has been characterized by a sincerity and depth of emotion fiercely sought in the most primitive strata of life and in the simplest and crudest situations.

In England for some time the short story has tended to lose those characteristics which we, in company with the French, have long regarded as the hall-mark of the form. It is tending to become either a short novel or a long tale, neither of which, properly speaking, is a short story.

A number of factors have influenced the literary form in the meantime.

Many critics believe the reason for the present length

of the short story a commercial one. They say that when magazines grew to be dependent on advertising as their chief source of income, and when to display that advertising effectively they took up the device of continuing the story in the back of the magazine surrounded by advertisements, it was found necessary to use longer and longer stories. At times such a consideration may have influenced some editors, but it is a safe hazard that no editor ever refused a good story because it was too short, whereas dozens of stories are constantly rejected because they are too long. As our ideas of what material is available for short stories have changed, so the length to which certain material must be treated has changed, and to-day there is no limit to the size of the short story. Only its treatment distinguishes it from a short novel. Briefly a short story is simpler, less complex, more sparsely peopled, covers a shorter period of time, and is concerned less with gradual developments than with sharply defined changes.

No one can safely predict what aspect the short story will present toward the middle of the century as a result of present-day experiments in this field. But it should not be overlooked that this experimentation and consequent lack of rigidity is a healthful symptom; for when any type of art has crystallized into a form from which little deviation is attempted or accepted, it is usually past its period of fullest vigor. We may, therefore, confidently expect the short story to retain indefinitely its important position in fiction.

TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF THE  
SHORT STORY

At the end of this volume exercises will be found that deal with the critical and constructive aspects of the short story. Similarly the introduction presents material for both critic and writer, stressing, however, those points that a discerning critic and a careful writer share in common.

The most common terms used in any discussion of the short story are *setting*, *plot*, and *characterization*.

## SETTING

By setting is meant all that pertains to the background of the story: the time, the place, with its particular traditions (if any), the climate, the physical features of the landscape, the mood or environment of the main character.

By *atmosphere*, a term sometimes used in connection with setting, is meant a pervading influence which can be felt rather than perceived. The atmosphere of gentle tragedy which pervades *White Birches* is implied in the description of the clumps of slender trees which had the aspect both of a shrine and a retreat for Anne, in the lack of complete harmony between husband and wife, and in the gentle recklessness of Anne's own character. The atmosphere of a story may be said to be pleasant or unpleasant, gloomy, joyous, placid, emotional, or commonplace.

The amateur who desires to write a short story should first determine *where* the story happened. He should

decide upon a locality with which he is familiar. He will fall into embarrassments too numerous to catalogue if, having never been nearer Paris than a New York wharf, he attempts to write of the Latin Quarter. One attribute of the power to create is ability to see the commonplace in a new light, to see it as if for the first time. Unfortunately a person beginning to write is likely to shun the material that lies close at hand. To a beginner the pleasure of fiction seems to lie in remote lands and times. He can, however, satisfy his desire for material other than that which he considers flat and stale by setting himself to learn of unusual parts of his own community. He might do well to seek the point of view of homesick transients, or of groups that live within every community unto themselves without sharing in the community life. Such people as these will have opinions concerning the most trivial elements of life in the writer's home town; they are quite likely to make him indignant or amused, but they cannot fail to show him how new points of view freshen old material.

After having provided himself with the best material he can secure about the locality where his story takes place, the writer should consider carefully how much of this detail is necessary to his story. The more truly he possesses the eye for "copy" the more will he be tempted by his enthusiastic discovery of the new in the old to overload his story with setting. He should remember that when setting is furnishing background only, not the chief interest of the story, it should never be allowed to become more obtrusive than the carefully planned but faintly indicated background of a Millet

painting. If the setting of the story be concerned with the mood of one character, it must be clearly related to the situation that starts the character upon the tangle of the plot. Sometimes this mood can be depicted more vividly by comparing it to a different mood of another character in the same story, or by comparing it with similar moods the reader and all humanity have known, or to moods of well-known characters in other fiction. It is the mark of literary deftness to suggest much in small space.

It is not impossible, however, that a beginner should plan a story with setting as its most important element. The problem is then more complex. The setting must be kept constantly in the reader's mind; new beauties, new obstacles, new horrors, as the case may be, should be frequently revealed to the reader. The skilled writer makes these revelations seem purely incidental, and he carefully avoids forcing long descriptions upon his audience. He exercises a careful selection over the details with which he hopes to impress his reader and rigorously suppresses irrelevant material. If the theme of a story is a mountaineer's conquest of obstacles, the points to be stressed are the facts that mountain people have usually been hardy and that they have had a strongly marked tenacity, coupled with great generosity. The fact, legitimately used by Milton in *L'Allegro*, that mountain people are usually liberty-loving has no bearing upon the problem in hand. It should, therefore, be omitted.

Generally speaking, the more familiar a locality is to the audience for which the story is planned, the briefer should be the space accorded setting. Wherever



possible, popular knowledge of the epoch or the location with which the writer deals should be utilized. It gives reality to the story. Atmospheres that are remote or strange require treatment at greater length, and they need, even more, a clarity of definition upon the part of the author. Wherever possible in dealing with the unusual, work from the known to the unknown. Make use of that great body of superstition that surrounds to some extent every unusual experience. Notice Mrs. Bacon's use of common superstition in *The Little Silver Heart*. It is not necessary to appear to concur in the superstition; indeed the adroit writer may mention such beliefs only to destroy them. Proper use of this device saves space, grips the reader, and gives the illusion of great knowledge, or tolerance, or both.

## PLOT

As the term plot is often used, it means a sequence of situations, or a brief abstract of the action of a narrative. In the closer definition applied to the short story it means the series of complications which arise through the clashing of two antagonistic forces, as, for instance, the forces of good and of evil. Without two opposing forces there can be no plot, and a narrative without clash of forces is not properly speaking a short story; it is rather a tale.

The climax is often defined as the point at which the reader begins to see the final outcome of the story. It should occur in this form of fiction as near the last sentence of the story as is consistent with a coherent and logical understanding of the story as a whole.

O. Henry wrote a large number of stories in which the final sentence contains the climax. In detective stories this rule is commonly violated. They frequently begin with the climax and, depending upon ingenuity to interest the reader, end upon a note of minor surprise; usually the solving of the mystery, the fixing of the blame, or the punishment of the criminal.

It is safe to say that to the amateur the plot seems the most important and often the most formidable part of the business of creation. He is warned on the one hand by critics that without plot he cannot construct a short story, and on the other by writers that there are no new plots. If the beginner stops to consider that each race in its first few centuries exhausted the possible plot combinations, and yet that there are more stories being written to-day than ever before, some of his dismay will vanish. The original plots have been tabulated many times both by critics and by authors. The tabulations do not, needless to say, agree; they vary in number from thirteen to one hundred and twenty. For convenience in presenting these plots we try to find them in their simplest form. Among those which remain most popular are:

Cinderella  
Beauty and the Beast  
Joseph and His Brethren  
The Prodigal Son  
Ruth and Boaz  
The Unjust Steward  
The Foolish Virgins  
The Sleeping Beauty



Solomon and the Two Mothers

Orpheus and Eurydice

Saul and the Witch of Endor

The Boy Samuel

David and Jonathan, Damon and Pythias

Elijah and the Ravens

Ananias and Sapphira

The whole series of tales in every folk lore that make gods or a special god the father of some superman.

Careful analysis of complicated plots shows that most stories are a variation of one of those given above or a combination of several.

Perhaps professional writers never consciously build their plots upon these ancient ones, but the amateur who despairs of building an original plot will do well to modernize one of these old stories for his first attempt.

### *Action*

Action is the force which carries the characters of a story from the point at which the story begins through the situations which arise from the complications of the plot to the point at which the story ends.

These two points are closest in stories which deal chiefly with setting, less close in stories which deal chiefly with character development, and least close in those which deal chiefly with plot interest.

*Devices of Order*

Because every story and every writer present individually a special problem, safe advice about the exact order in which to tell a story is difficult to give. A modern author remarked, apropos of telling a story in chronological order, "There is even a king's advice to that effect. Said the King in *Alice*, 'Begin at the beginning, go on to the end, and then stop.'" Some professional writers would not be willing to accept the royal edict for every story, but the beginner can find no better device to insure coherence.

With increasing skill and confidence a writer may introduce antecedent material late in the story, or may relate early in the story material that chronologically would belong much later. Both these devices are employed to whet the reader's curiosity. Through what is technically known as foreshadowing, they give the effect of an inescapable plan, a kind of literary fatalism which the characters cannot elude.

*Suspense*

The device known as suspense is useful. The writer, leaving the narrative at a highly dramatic point, introduces non-dramatic material, such as descriptive passages concerning characters, setting, and atmosphere. His purpose in diverting the attention of the reader from the progress of the story is to heighten interest by deliberately refusing for the present to satisfy it. Unwise use of this device sometimes produces an uneven, jerky effect that is highly undesirable. The canny novice

will use this, as all other special devices, sparingly, but he will, nevertheless, attempt to master it.

## CHARACTERIZATION

The men and women with whom a story is peopled may of course be purely imaginary persons whose qualities through the exposition of the author are readily recognizable as belonging to similar people in real life. They may, of course, be taken from real life with certain qualities emphasized and others suppressed. In presenting as a character in fiction a person whom the writer knows well, he is likely to use all that he knows about the person, whether or not the details are pertinent to the situations in which he places the character.

Because each of us plays many different parts in this life, none of us is, without certain modifications, useful to the writer of fiction. A man may conceivably be the hero of his own life story, but the villain in the life of the man whose crimes he is called upon to punish. To present, therefore, a man as a character in fiction it is necessary to determine which of his traits belong with the rôle in which he is represented. If the man under discussion is a lawyer, and the situation upon which the story turns is the confronting of a murderer with a piece of conclusive evidence, the lawyer's traits as a kind father, as a rising young politician, as an unsuccessful dabbler in landscape painting will not be the ones to develop in the story. Quite appropriately they will not be mentioned at all, but the lawyer's vigor in prosecuting a case, his determination to see a piece of work through to the end, his insight

into human motives, and his willingness to work, even when physically worn out, for the sake of securing justice will be the traits to emphasize.

### *Dialogue*

All that has been said above concerning the careful selection of traits applies equally to the problem of what a writer shall let his characters think. Only very important ones, or those who for a moment have important thoughts, should be allowed to think at all.

What a character may be allowed to say, and how he shall be made to speak most effectively comes under the general head of dialogue. The study of dialogue presupposes the world for a laboratory, and particularly the work of a good playwright for a textbook. Next to careful observation of people in real life the young writer will find nowhere better instruction in cramming dialogue with suggestive meaning than in the plays of Shakespeare. To the Elizâbethan producer stage directions as we understand them to-day were practically unknown; upon the fitting of the action to the word and the word to the action depended the coherent interpretation of the dialogue.

Compare the voluminous stage directions preceding each act of a modern play with the naked but suggestive dialogue of Shakespeare, who had no opportunity for lengthy exposition, but who needed to indicate accompanying business and gestures. Such lines as

“Leave wringing of your hands; peace! sit you down  
And let me wring your heart”

indicate what possibilities the student will find in Shakespeare.

Moreover, no student who hopes to write witty or brilliant dialogue can afford to neglect Shaw, Wilde, Barrie, and Milne.

Much excellent practice may be secured by beginners through the writing of monologues. An even better exercise is to be found in imitating the broken conversations made famous by Dorothy Parker. *Life* and the department known as *Short Turns and Encores* in the *Saturday Evening Post* have printed some of these fragments. If the student examines them, he will find that without a word of description he can tell with some accuracy the type and even the idiosyncrasies of the people speaking. He will at times catch the tone in which a remark is made, and often he will see the accompanying gesture.

With the study of dialogue belongs also the consideration of the use of dialect. Only those blessed with extraordinarily accurate ears should attempt dialect. Most people who read a dialect story think that nothing could be easier than to write one. A little practice with this difficult medium of expression is disillusioning. Writers like Ring Lardner who make capital of particular dialect find it worth their while to be scrupulously careful in the phonetics they employ. Shoddy imitators are revealed to the careful critic by their failure to exercise care in representing the niceties of perverted speech.

The proportion of dialogue to pure narration in each story calls for special knowledge of each case. In general, material presented through the words of characters

is more vital and interesting than material presented by the author. Presentation by dialogue is, however, usually a longer process than presentation by the author. Devices to overcome this last drawback are not always satisfactory. However, one device that is gaining in popularity is that of indirect discourse. Readers of Hugh Walpole, Sheila Kaye-Smith, and Katherine Mansfield often put down a story feeling that the greater part of the narrative has been presented through dialogue, but a careful rereading usually proves that the bulk of the story has been told in the indirect discourse of the principal character. This device prevents the author from becoming obtrusive and secures closer attention from the reader than the same amount of direct exposition would command.

The final point to be considered under characterization is the actions of the characters. The actions of characters are determined, as in life, by forces which are at constant war: love, hate, hunger, greed, morality, and convention. Characters are also controlled to the same extent as real men by their environment. Forces over which they have some control may seek to master them and sometimes succeed, sometimes fail. Forces over which they have no control may also influence them, and people whom they hate or love can exert a strong power over them.

But whatever the point under consideration, the final test for the writer is whether or not the action, speech, or thought can be made to seem a reasonable expression of the character he is presenting.



## PRESENTATION

There are five main methods of presentation: through the third person as pure narration; through the words of an eye witness; through the thoughts of a character; through his actions; and through dialogue.

The problem is to determine which method is most appropriate to the author's purpose; a tale of great improbability, for instance, is made more credible if told by an eyewitness. Most authors refuse to limit themselves to any one form of presentation, but use a combination of all.

Closely allied to the problem of presentation is that of the point of view which the author should assume. Establishing the point of view and adhering rigidly to it, is with an author, as with a painter, one of the chief devices used to secure unity. An author often identifies himself with some one character and relates the story as it affected that character, explaining his thoughts, actions, and environment fully. Completely opposed to this point of view is the one of assumed omniscience concerning the characters, the author sharing with or concealing from the reader such parts of this knowledge as the exigencies of the plot may dictate.

## TYPES OF STORIES

There are generally conceded to be three classes into which all short stories fall: the group in which the plot of the story is the most important consideration; the group in which setting is the most important; and the

group in which characterization is the most important consideration.

Into the first group fall, of course, stories of adventure, surprise, and mystery. In the second are grouped the stories that could happen logically in but one place or in but one historical epoch: the love of Lancelot and Guinevere; the devotion of a southern Mammy to her white foster children; the life of a coal miner; the experiences of the "Forty-niners"; life in the desert, in the Arctic, in the South Seas, in the business office, in the schoolroom. To the last classification are assigned stories concerning the reactions of certain carefully defined characters to specific problems, such as the reaction of a miser to the problem of living without his hoard; a minister's reaction to life shorn of his belief in God; a jealous child's reaction to the problem of how to treat a brother or sister who has seemingly supplanted him in his parents' affection; a sensitive man's reaction to life in public office beset with criticism.

### THE SHORT STORY AS A SOURCE OF PLEASURE

Finally it is essential to remember that the short story is one aspect of a great art, and that one of the most important functions of any art is that of entertainment. Pleasure derived from any of the arts is dependent upon the discrimination which those to be entertained possess. This discrimination is built up in two ways: first by attempting to practice the art, and secondly by studying carefully the work of recognized artists. The exercises that supplement the stories in this book are intended



to help you develop sufficient appreciation to enjoy all stories more fully. The short stories in the following collection were all written to be enjoyed; they have been selected because each has some especial contribution to make to your pleasure. Some will please you at once; some will require a certain amount of carefully built up discrimination before you find them entertaining; but all are well within your grasp and your constantly developing power of appreciation. Be sure you understand what you read; refer to the exercises and the introduction for help when you need it; but above all read for the pleasure of good stories well told.



## A USE FOR CLOUDS \*

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

YOUNG Carl Van Wert had never before been north of Boston, and he felt like a pioneer. He had gone to sleep the night before on the Pullman, from whose windows he had been able to look forth across a familiar countryside. This morning he saw bold and barren hills, brown fields, leafless trees close reefed for winter's gales, and everywhere the warmth and color of spruce and fir and hemlock and of pine. There was, about the towns where the train stopped, an air of impermanency. The houses were of frame construction, narrow and high; they seemed flimsy. He thought a stiff wind would have toppled many of them. As a matter of fact, a stiff wind was blowing that morning; dry leaves scurried in panic before it, for it came from the north and there was ice in its breath; but young Carl Van Wert, in the warm Pullman, had no hint of this.

He began to see, on the platforms along the way, men garbed for winter in kersey pants and felt boots and heavy, sheep-lined coats. They repelled him, for they did not look scrupulously clean, and he had been taught from babyhood to brush his teeth twice or thrice a day, bathe at least once a day and tend his nails. These matters had been insisted on so strenuously that they

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had assumed in his eyes more importance than they deserved. So he did not like these soiled-looking men; but they interested him, and he wondered if there were any here aboard the train, and decided to inspect the day coaches and see.

The coaches offended his nostrils, and on the platform between the last of them and the smoking car, he stopped to light a cigarette; then opened the door of the smoker and was immediately grateful for the precaution. The car, to his first glance, seemed full of men: enormous men with wide shoulders and broad faces and mustaches and greasy hair. The air was foul with the smoke from their foul pipes; the floor was littered and stained so that he could find no clean place to set his foot; and the odor of many hot and steaming human bodies, each swathed in garments too long worn, struck him like a shock of horrible and nauseating fear. One or two of the men saw him and grinned good-naturedly; and then the brakeman came across the swaying platform at his back and stood beside him in the open door. Van Wert welcomed this brakeman as an ally.

"Who are they?" he asked.

"Crew going into the woods," the brakeman replied.

"Lumberjacks?"

Van Wert had seen the word in a book. The brakeman grinned faintly, but he nodded.

"Yeah."

The young man, with no further parley, fled back to his Pullman. The experience had been a shock to him; he weighed it in his thoughts and was faintly appalled. For he, too, was going into the woods. At Princeton he had decided on forestry school.

His father weighed the idea, asked acutely, "Sure you want that kind of life, son?" His son was sure. "Then I'll tell you," said old Van Wert. "I'll fix it up for you to go into the woods for two-three months—see how things are done on the ground. It'll do you good physically, and you'll learn something; and you'll know whether you want to go on."

It had been so arranged. When this train should presently stop—he looked at his watch and saw that it would be less than ten minutes now—he would be at the jumping-off place. There remained ahead of him a long automobile ride, a motor-boat trip, probably some tramping before he should reach his destination far up in the spruce forests. He had expected to enjoy himself, but the sight of his potential fellow workers in the smoking car ahead disturbed him.

"They say even a pig, given a chance, will keep himself clean," he thought disgustedly. "They're lower than swine; they're clouds."

Remembrance of them made him go into the lavatory and wash his hands. Then the engine whistled, the train began to hiccup on its brakes, and he knew it was time to get off. The porter helped him on with his coat, bore away his bags. There was also a steamer trunk in the baggage car ahead; but, by the time he had alighted, that end of the platform was thronged with the men from the smoker, so he made no attempt to claim the trunk until they should have disappeared.

Their voices came to him—hoarse, shouting yet strangely musical voices. A young man in corduroy knickerbockers and a plaid Mackinaw had met them, was checking their names, shouting at them, grinning in

response to their jests, answering their loud calls. As they answered to their names they climbed into large-bodied motor trucks that would transport them on the first long stage of their journey into the wilderness. Van Wert watched from a vantage at the other end of the platform, and, when the last of the trucks was loaded and had lumbered away, he was not surprised that the young man in corduroys turned in his direction.

This young man looked at him for a moment, then said pleasantly, "You're Van Wert, aren't you?"

"Yes," Van Wert nodded. "Did you come to meet me?"

The other held out his hand.

"Jenks is my name. I came down to get that bunch headed in the right direction, and the boss told me to bring you back. I've got a flivver around behind the station. Hope you didn't mind waiting?"

"You had my sympathy." Van Wert smiled. He meant to be friendly, but Jenks seemed surprised.

"Sympathy? How's that?"

"Oh, having to handle swine like that!"

Jenks chuckled a little.

"They're not so bad. You ought to see some of the stuff we get up here. Those were good men. I know 'em. They were up here all last winter."

"A good half of them had drunk more than was good for them," Van Wert suggested.

"Half?" Jenks laughed. "Lord, all of them!" He was inspecting the trunk to which Van Wert had led him. "That yours?"

"Yes—if you can manage."

"Oh, transportation's the best thing we do up here.

I can take your stuff right on the flivver. There's no one going up with us. Trunk on the running board and the other stuff in back." He turned away. "I'll back her in here to the platform."

Ten minutes later Van Wert's luggage was bestowed as Jenks had promised. The train meanwhile had pulled ahead into the yards. As Jenks tied the last knot in the rope that held the trunk, a brakeman came out on the rear platform of his train and yelled to him.

When Jenks answered, the brakeman shouted, "One of your gang's soused in the smoker here."

Jenks smiled a little and strode that way. Van Wert hesitated, decided to wait where he was. By and by Jenks and the brakeman appeared, dragging between them a small, soiled and abhorrent figure. The man's head sagged and swayed weakly from side to side. His stumbling feet dragged along the cinders. They brought him down the track and stuffed him bodily into the tonneau of the car.

Van Wert had moved to one side, out of the way, but at this he asked, "Why do you put him in there?"

"He was asleep on the floor between two seats," Jenks explained. "The others probably thought it was a joke to leave him. I'll take him up with us."

Van Wert said slowly and painfully, "But he's so damned foul, you know."

Jenks looked at him with quick surprise, then looked away.

"Well, it's my job to get him in, anyway. He ought to have gone in the trucks, but they're on their way now."

"I shouldn't think carrion like that was worth carting



in," Van Wert suggested, and Jenks smiled that ready smile of his.

"He's a good hand with an ax," he replied. "And he can drive a team and he's a first-rate mechanic." Van Wert must have seemed incredulous. "Oh, I know he doesn't look it," Jenks agreed. "But he's a good man."

Their little car rattled through the town and began the long climb beyond. The great lake spread to their left and ahead, and toward the crest of the hill Jenks stopped so that Van Wert might see its splendor. The strong northerly wind was whipping the water into whitecaps, between which lay deepest blue; the mountains behind them and up the lake ahead were as blue as the water, beneath a sky that was covered with scudding, shadowing clouds. There was a somber note in this blue that predominated everywhere, and the two young men buttoned their coats more snugly.

"Cold," Van Wert said. "That's gorgeous all right, but it's cold as the devil in this wind."

Jenks, starting the car, nodded.

"Wind holds that way, we'll be frozen up pretty quick. There was ice in the coves this morning."

They dropped down toward the lake again, along that marvelous road built for forty-odd miles through thick woods by the great company which Van Wert had come to serve. Jenks told the story of the road.

"It's pretty good now, but I can remember when it took six horses to pull a buckboard through here," he said, and Van Wert wondered audibly. The man in the tonneau slept, with loud snores.

They stopped for a moment at Pickerel Bay while



Jenks went into the store there; stopped again at Rough River, a dozen miles farther on, where heavily clad men seated idly along the veranda rail before the store watched them from narrow eyes. These expressionless eyes disturbed Van Wert. The men were unshaven and unclean.

When Jenks came out and they drove on toward the Plant Farm, Van Wert asked, "All the workmen up here as dirty as the specimens I've seen?"

Jenks looked at him sidewise and chuckled.

"Why, they're not really lily-white lads, you know." He saw the other's movement of repulsion and dropped a hand lightly on his companion's knee. "You'll get used to it, son," he said paternally, though he was scarce as old as Van Wert. "You can't go much on looks up here. I've seen some pretty seedy-looking bums turn out a good day's work." He jerked his head backward. "That man in the back seat there—he's a Polack, or something, with a hell of a name. We call him Tom Jack. He was in the Austrian Army for a while; but he deserted first chance he got and came over here somehow and tried to get in with our bunch when we took hold; but they wouldn't take a chance on him. Tom's a good man; can sing like the devil and work like two devils. But I don't suppose he'll take a good bath from now till spring."

"He ought to be made to," Van Wert said hotly. "These—they're not men. They're children. They can't think for themselves. You have to tell them what to do, and dry-nurse them to keep them from getting sick, and keep them amused and see they don't stumble over their own feet. They're not half so intelligent as a good

machine." He looked at Tom Jack, snoring peacefully behind them. "He's a clod!" he said, and liked the word. "A clod!"

Jenks was not by nature argumentative. He pointed ahead to where a flock of partridges fed in the road, moving slowly to one side to let the car go by, like rather tame chickens. A little farther on they jumped four deer, and the creatures bounded through the forest beside them, slanting away on a tangent, for a hundred yards before they disappeared. By and by a turn in the road brought Katahdin into view ahead of them, and Jenks pointed.

"There's some little hill," he commented.

Van Wert, by the stark beauty of that uncouth and rugged pile, was silenced and made breathless; little more was said, and so presently they reached Plant Farm.

Toward midafternoon, when the early dusk of a cloudy day was already upon them, Van Wert began the next stage of his journey. The manner of it was none of his choosing; he found himself in the hands of destiny in the shape of Matt Riley, who was in charge at the Farm. He was to go by motor boat up Summacook Lake, a thirty-mile trip; and with him would go that crew of men who had been his traveling companions on the train and whom he and Jenks had passed, in the lumbering motor trucks, on the way to the Farm. Tom Jack, awakened from his slumber, had rejoined his companions. The motor trucks would bear them on to the foot of the lake; Jenks drove Van Wert over and turned him over to Chiswick, who had the engine of the boat in charge.

Van Wert looked out across the tumbling waters of Summacook with some misgivings. The wind was blowing cold and ever colder; he was glad he had found an opportunity to change into rough and warmer clothing. He could see ice along the shore in both directions, and thick ice in the coves and a scum of ice out toward the open water.

"You won't be able to run this boat much longer," he told Chiswick, and the engineer nodded.

"Breaking ice now all the time," he grumbled. "They keep us moving back and forth up the lake so fast she don't have time to freeze. This rotten engine'll lay down on me some night and we'll freeze in out there."

Van Wert gave only a casual inspection to the craft that was to take him on the next stage of the journey. He saw that she had a cabin forward into which a dozen men might crowd, and a smaller cabin aft that sheltered the engine. In her broad waist there was space for carrying stores, and this was already heaped with miscellaneous stuff jumbled in apparent disorder. When the crew of men presently tumbled aboard, each throwing his pack down wherever was easiest, the boat seemed to settle lumberingly in the water under the load. Van Wert had given some thought to the question of where he should settle himself. He surrendered the forward cabin, where a score of men had packed into space fit for little more than half that number. He meant to stay with Chiswick, preferring the fumes of gasoline, which hung heavy over the craft and especially heavy in the engine cabin, to the reek of the human bodies. When the men were all aboard, they got under way without ceremony.

Jenks, from the wharf, called, "Good luck, old man," to Van Wert.

The engine, cranked painfully by hand with a long iron lever, barked and caught, and the broad-beamed craft turned its nose through the slush ice toward mid-lake. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

"How long shall we be on the way?" Van Wert asked Chiswick, and the engineer said, "Ought to make it by eight o'clock, unless something happens."

Van Wert smiled a little at the pessimistic tone which seemed habitual to the other.

"What's likely to happen?" he asked.

"This rotten scow—you never know," said Chiswick gloomily. "She's a child of misfortune. Nothing ever surprises me."

Bursts of laughter came to them now and then from the men in the cabin forward or under its lee in the waist. Van Wert stepped out to fill his lungs with fresh air and the cold wind whipped him stingingly. The sky, he saw, was covered with clouds now.

"Snow?" he shouted in to Chiswick, and the other nodded sulkily.

"Yes!" he assented.

Tom Jack, the only man in the gang forward who was an individual in Van Wert's eyes, crawled aft and went in to see Chiswick. Van Wert, outside, listened curiously. The Pole spoke, he discovered, fair English—understandable enough. This surprised him; he had expected a twisted, foreign tongue.

"How she hitting?" Tom Jack demanded, grinning good-naturedly at Chiswick and pointing to the engine.

"Now and then," Chiswick told him.

Tom Jack nodded in cheerful understanding.

"Same ol' goat, she is," he agreed. "She soun' lak hell."

"Why, say," cried Chiswick, warming to the subject, "she can think of more things to do that she oughtn't—it's wonderful!"

Tom Jack clapped him on the shoulder.

"Tha's right," he applauded. "You tell 'em. Well, you all right this trip. Tom Jack fix her if she go bust any."

Chiswick actually grinned.

"Sure!" he agreed.

Shouts arose from the men forward, and Van Wert saw they were looking at him; but he could understand no word. Then Tom Jack climbed out of the engine cabin and yelled at them in jumbled syllables, bending to explain to Chiswick.

"I'm go'n' sing them little song," he explained. "These boys crying for me."

He winked elaborately, grinned at Van Wert and climbed along the rail beside the cabin. Van Wert heard his voice uplifted, sweet and clear and rich of tone. The words were meaningless, the melody strangely disturbing. Van Wert found himself responding to the charm of that voice, shivering a little. Then the men burst into a great guffaw, and he guessed that the song was ribald, and was disgusted with himself for having been affected and went below with Chiswick again.

Darkness began presently to thicken about them. Two or three of the men, grinning apologetically, sidled into seats beside the engine, by their gestures indicating how cold it was on deck. Van Wert was driven into the open,

and went forward, picking his way. Overside, bits of ice slid along the side of the craft, and he could see that they were running through a channel, in some places narrow, in others almost as wide as the lake; could see that everywhere ice lined the shores. The whipping wind was dead in his face when he looked forward, but he was warmly clad and welcomed the clean sweep and scourging of it; and he climbed along the rail beside the cabin to the very bow; found there in the forward end of the main cabin a smaller compartment he had not marked before, in which a man tended the wheel.

This man slid open a window and shouted to him, "Come on inside. You'll freeze out there!"

Van Wert liked him. He had a round, freckled face, and he had a scrubbed look which Van Wert thought pleasing. There was barely room for two of them inside his cubby-hole.

"I didn't spot this place," Van Wert explained, "or I'd have been begging shelter before. These chaps aboard here are too strong for me in close quarters."

The other laughed cheerfully.

"Right you are, son," he agreed. He added, as though it were an unimportant afterthought, "Roberts is my name."

"Van Wert's mine." They shook hands.

"Going in?" Roberts asked. Van Wert nodded.

"To learn the game," he explained. "I'm green as grass."

"Nothing much to learn," Roberts said casually. A gust shook the boat. "Ain't this some night, what?" he asked.

"Surely is. Freeze up pretty soon, don't you?"



"Any day. This wind stops, it'll freeze overnight."

They fell silent, staring ahead into the darkness. Roberts turned on a searchlight set on the roof above his head, and its rays illumined the tumbling water. The shores were dimly to be seen on either hand, their distance unguessable. Dark was almost fully come. Darkness had quite come when, half an hour later, the throbbing of the engine became uncertain, reluctant, and stopped. Roberts grinned.

"There she goes again," he said casually. "I'll bet Chiswick is swearing. Well, time for a pipe."

He lighted it. Secure from the wind as they were, Van Wert began to feel cold, for there was no heat in the cabin. Roberts' pipe glowed.

By and by he asked, "You know how to steer?"

Van Wert nodded.

"I'm going back—see if I can help," Roberts explained. "You stick around here and keep her headed right when we get under way. Chiswick don't understand the temperament of this engine."

The other assented and climbed out on the bow of the boat to let Roberts pass. Roberts went astern. The workmen in the main cabin raised a shouting chorus of song. Van Wert saw a dozen men clustered about the engine cabin, through whom Roberts pushed his way; heard the voice of the man Tom Jack as he climbed out on deck. Tom Jack shouted something in his native tongue, and the other men laughed loudly.

The thing that happened came very quickly. First a man's startled oath; instantly a louder cry. Van Wert thought there was more light aft than there had been. Then a small sound like the ripping of a handkerchief

swelled till it might have been the ripping of the very fabric of the heavens, and flames showed. A man tumbled, screaming, into the water overside.

There was the noise of a puff, like the exhalation from a giant's lungs, and the whole after part of the boat was disrupted in a volcano of liquid flame, roaring flame.

Van Wert's senses were perfectly clear, but his muscles would not function. He was not in the least frightened, but he was paralyzed. He could not move, could not speak, could not cry out. Yet he saw with a clarity of vision which was photographic; saw men who cried out, moving frantically and without aim to and fro; saw little Tom Jack beating tentatively at the flames with a blanket from the mass of dunnage amidships. Other men erupted from the cabin and raised their voices in a babel of tongues. Every one moved with extraordinary and fruitless speed; the voices were unnaturally loud, with an undertone like a shriek.

He saw Tom Jack again, withdrawn from the mass, busy with some peculiar task. The little man had stepped to one side, out of the tumult, and had taken off his cap. From the pocket of his coat he took something which Van Wert could not see, and put it in his cap and jammed the cap tightly on his head. Then he looked off into the darkness toward the shores on either side. Still Van Wert stood paralyzed. He was not yet afraid; but he found himself immensely interested in the movements of Tom Jack.

The flames were moving forward very swiftly, pressing the men back till Van Wert found himself in the center of a thick pack of them. One man was crowded off and



fell into the water, and bobbed there, screaming and clutching at the sides of the boat for a while, and then Van Wert did not hear him any more. He perceived that the stern of the boat was lower in the water, and thought with dull interest:

"Hello! We're sinking! How are we going to get ashore?"

Then Tom Jack began to shout; and his voice was not, as the others had been, unnaturally loud. It was merely firm and clear. When no one paid any heed to his shouting, he began to sing; and that was so strange that every one hushed to listen. Then Tom Jack ceased singing and spoke to them quickly, half in English, half in his own tongue; and Van Wert saw that he was pointing toward the right-hand shore. When he was done speaking, a clamor of protest and outcry arose. The great light of the flames illumined them all. The men surged and twisted in a mass, and through this mass Tom Jack picked his way to where Van Wert stood. To Van Wert he said cheerfully:

"We better take a swim now. No boat. She's go'n' go away from here." He pointed downward, grinning amiably. "Not far over there," he added, gesturing toward the shore. "You better come along."

Van Wert's lips moved stiffly.

He replied, "All right!"

Tom Jack nodded.

"Tha's good," he assented. "All right! Le's go!"

He turned in a matter-of-fact way and sat down on the edge of the deck at Van Wert's feet, and turned around so that he could lower himself into the water. Van Wert had seen him kick off the rubber overshoes

which he wore outside his felt boots, and Van Wert took his knife and slit his own laces and tossed his boots away. Tom Jack was in the water, moving toward shore, and two or three men had followed him. He turned to shout back some laughing remark, and a dozen men laughed with him and jumped into the water. Van Wert discarded his coat; then he slid gingerly over the side. It was as though a sharp knife cut him where the water touched his flesh. He shivered, was instantly too cold to shiver, and began to swim, welcoming the exertion. The water about him was dotted with the heads of men. Other men on the boat behind screamed and ran to and fro in desperate indecision.

The swimming men came presently to ice; thin ice that would not bear their weight. They broke it away in front of them, leaning on it to rest a little when their exertions were more than they could bear. Van Wert heard something roar behind them, and looked back into a great glare of light, which vanished to leave only blackness and the sound of anguished cries, which lessened and ceased. Then Tom Jack's voice from ahead shouted encouragingly, and he forgot the lost boat and pushed forward, thrashing at the thin ice angrily. A man at his shoulders strangled and clutched at him and sank while Van Wert instinctively shuddered away.

He was a strong swimmer, and the men ahead of him were breaking the ice, so that he had little to do. When they were wearied and fell to one side, he passed them, and so by and by found himself shoulder to shoulder with Tom Jack himself in the bitter water.

Tom Jack looked at him and grinned as cheerfully as

ever, and said in a steady tone, "So you come along! Tha's all right too!"

Van Wert nodded stiffly, his teeth set, numb with cold and with the sense of ruthless, simple tragedy.

"It's cold," he said.

Tom Jack crushed away the ice before him, pressing shoreward.

"Col' enough to put some ice on the devil's whisker," he agreed cheerfully. "Bes' to work ver' hard and keep warm so."

The man seemed tireless. Van Wert watched him for a moment with a weary and indifferent admiration as he methodically broke the ice by bearing his weight upon it or by beating it with his fists, and thrust the floating cakes behind him and pushed on. The competitive instinct awoke in him and he began to keep pace with the other, driving himself by sheer will. His efforts were clumsy; once he splashed water on Tom Jack's head and the little man turned on him fiercely.

"Don' do that! I got matches in my cap!" he cried.

Van Wert remembered his glimpse of Tom Jack on the boat taking something from his pocket, stowing it within his cap. Even in that overwhelming moment, when his own faculties were paralyzed, Tom Jack had been able to plan ahead, to think. Van Wert's opinion of the little man was being greatly modified. He remembered his first impression with something like chagrin, and strove more mightily to keep pace with the other's tireless efforts.

One of the men splashing through the water behind them began to wail, a doleful, crooning, dirgelike sound. Tom Jack paused long enough to fling a word over his

shoulder. A harsh, challenging word, if tone meant anything. His voice cracked like a whip; then became melting and humorous, chuckles running through it. And from the floundering, freezing men in the bitter water low and choking laughter answered his. Tom Jack was content, flung himself against the ice again.

The long ordeal of that passage toward the shore seemed to Van Wert an eternity of torture. The cold was pain beyond belief. At first the bitter water had burned his skin, had seemed to cut and scour at him. Then it struck in; his feet and hands began to ache; this blinding ache extended up his legs and his arms. Yet the water was warmer than the air. When he lifted his shoulders to break down obstructing ice, the wind cut him to the bone, so that he was almost glad to shelter himself in the freezing water again. His hands no longer seemed to belong to him. His legs had ceased to function. He did not swim; rather pulled himself flounderingly along by pawing at the inert and maddeningly stubborn ice.

It seemed to him that it became harder and harder to break a shoreward way. He thought his strength was failing, and a vast surrender embraced his spirit and seemed to offer it peace and rest.

But Tom Jack slapped him stingingly on the cheek and cried, "Come on, bo! She'll hol' us up now pretty soon!"

And he saw that the ice was, indeed, thicker here; they were come into a cove somewhat sheltered from the full sweep of the wind by a point off to the northward. The water, less disturbed, had had more time to freeze. He could hear the men struggling behind them. They

had begun to call out to Tom Jack; and Tom Jack answered, heartening and encouraging the weaker ones.

He was able to estimate afterwards that they had been a full half hour in that icy water before the end came. It came suddenly. He perceived that Tom Jack, on hands and knees, was out on the ice and that it bore his weight.

Then the little man shouted something over his shoulder, added to Van Wert in English, "I'm go'n' make some fire. You come along quick," and began to crawl swiftly toward the shore, his weight distributed upon the ice.

Van Wert himself was heavier; the crust still broke with him; but presently another man scuttled away toward the shore from a point at one side; then another; and then he found the ice would no longer break beneath him, and he dragged himself forward across the crumbling edges and lay on his stomach, breathing gaspingly, till the scourge of the wind woke new agonies in his tormented body and flogged him toward where a fire, gloriously beautiful to his ice-rimmed eyes, was already leaping upward among the trees.

Followed an interval when his senses reeled drunkenly; when he was conscious of a great heat and a great cold, like two monsters fighting for this body of his; when his garments steamed and scorched above his aching flesh. Seventeen of them, there were, about that fire. There had been many more aboard the motor boat when she started up Summacook. Chiswick and Roberts had been in the engine cabin; the others were gone in nameless, solitary ways with none to see.

By and by came shouts from the lake, and lights, men

running across the ice with warm clothing and whiskey and hot things to drink; and Van Wert lost touch with what went on about him; was glad to let his soul slide into a warm oblivion.

It was three weeks before he saw Tom Jack again, for while the little man went on next morning to his appointed place in the woods, Van Wert was abed, given a rough tenderness and care, lost in a feverish delirium. But when he was able, Van Wert sought out the other, for he had things to say.

Tom Jack saw him coming and grinned and held up his hand and called, "How-do, mister? You feel better now?"

Van Wert gripped that hand, and he said earnestly and huskily, "Tom Jack, I've come up here to apologize to you."

Tom Jack stared at him a little.

"Tha's new one on me," he said. "What is it?"

"I just want to tell you," the boy awkwardly explained, "that I think you're a man, a real man; and I'm proud to know you."

"Sure I'm a man," Tom Jack confessed, in bewilderment. "Anybody can see that, I guess."

"I couldn't, first time I saw you," Van Wert told him, warm with the pleasure of amends. "I thought you weren't worth much, just because you needed a bath."

Tom Jack stared at him; then he chuckled; then he laughed.

"Ho!" he cried uproariously. "But I was ver' drunk that day." He saw Van Wert was hurt by his laughter, and touched the boy on the arm. "Tha's all right, mister," he said soothingly. "Anybody would think so



when I was like that. But I am not real dirty, you see; I wash myself when I need it every time."

"Sure you do!" Van Wert assented lamely.

Tom Jack opened his hands in an expressive gesture.

"So you see tha's not your fault," he explained. "If you had known about my washing, it would have been all right, so we are fr'en's."

Van Wert laughed a little, and gripped the other's hand again.

"That's the main thing, anyway, Tom Jack," he agreed. "Just so we are friends."

## WHITE BIRCHES \*

By TEMPLE BAILEY

### I

A WOMAN, who under sentence of death could plan immediately for a trip to the circus, might seem at first thought incredibly light-minded.

You had, however, to know Anne Dunbar and the ten years of her married life to understand. Her husband was fifteen years her senior, and he had few illusions. He had fallen in love with Anne because of a certain gay youth in her which had endured throughout the days of a dreadful operation and a slow convalescence. He had been her surgeon, and, propped up in bed, Anne's gray eyes had shone upon him, the red-gold curls of her cropped hair had given her a look of almost boyish beauty, and this note of boyishness had been emphasized by the straight slenderness of the figure outlined beneath the white covers.

Anne had married Ridgeley Dunbar because she loved him. And love to Anne had been all fire and flame and spirit. It did not take her long to learn that her husband looked upon love and life as matters of flesh and blood—and bones. By degrees his materialism imposed itself upon Anne. She admired Ridgeley immensely.

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She worshiped, in fact, the wonder of his day's work. He healed the sick, he cured the halt and blind, and he scoffed at Anne's superstitions—"I can match every one of your Bible miracles. There's nothing to it, my dear. Death is death and life is life—so make the most of it." Anne tried to make the most of it. But she found it difficult. In the first place her husband was a very busy man. He seemed to be perfectly happy with his cutting people up, and his medical books, and the articles which he wrote about the intricate clockwork inside of us which ticks off the hours from birth to death. Now and then he went out to the theater with his wife or to dine with friends. But, as a rule, she went alone. She had a limousine, a chauffeur, a low swung touring car—and an electric. Her red hair was still wonderful, and she dressed herself quite understandingly in grays and whites and greens. If she did not wear habitually her air of gay youth, it was revived in her now and then when something pleased or excited her. And her eyes would shine as they had shone in the hospital when Ridgeley Dunbar had first bent over her bed.

They shone on Christopher Carr when he came home from the war. He was a friend of her husband; or rather, as a student in the medical school, he had listened to the lectures of the older man and had made up his mind to know him personally, and had thus by sheer persistence linked their lives together.

Anne had never met him. He had been in India when she had married Ridgeley, and then there had been a few years in Egypt, where he had studied some strange germ of which she could never remember the name. He had plenty of money, hence he was not tied to a prac-

tice. But when the war began he had offered his services and had made a great record.

"He is one of the big men of the future," Ridgeley Dunbar had said.

But when Christopher came back with an infected arm, which might give him trouble, it was not the time to talk of futures. He was invited to spend July at the Dunbars' country home in Connecticut, and Ridgeley brought him out at the week-end.

The Connecticut estate consisted of a rambling stone house, an old-fashioned garden and, beyond the garden, a grove of white birches.

"What a heavenly place!" Christopher said toward the end of dinner. "How did you happen to find it?"

"Oh, Anne did it. She motored for weeks, and she bought it because of the birches."

Anne's eyes were shining. "I'll show them to you after dinner."

She had decided at once that she liked Christopher. He still wore his uniform, and had the look of a soldier. But it wasn't that—it was the things he had been saying ever since the soup was served. No one had talked of the war as he talked of it. There had been other doctors whose minds had been on arms and legs—amputated; on wounds and shell shock—— And there had been a few who had sentimentalized. But Christopher had seemed neither to resent the frightfulness nor to care about the moral or spiritual consequences. He had found in it all a certain beauty of which he spoke with enthusiasm—"A silver dawn, and a patch of Blue Devils like smoke against it"; "A blood-red sunset, and a lot of airmen streaming across——"

He painted pictures, so that Anne saw battles as if a great brush had splashed them on an invisible canvas. There were just four at the table—the two men, Anne, and her second cousin, Jeanette Ware, who lived the year round in the Connecticut house, and was sixty and slightly deaf, but who wore modern clothes and had a modern mind.

It was not yet dark, and the light of the candles in sconces and on the table met the amethyst light that came through the wide-flung lattice. Anne's summer gown was something very thin in gray, and she wore an Indian necklace of pierced silver beads. Christopher had sent it to her as a wedding present, and she had always liked it.

When they rose from the table, Christopher said, "Now for the birches."

Somewhere in the distance the telephone rang, and a maid came in to say that Doctor Dunbar was wanted.

"Don't wait for me," he said. "I'll follow you."

Jeanette Ware hated the night air, and took her book to the lamp on the screened porch; and so it happened that Anne and Christopher came alone to the grove where the white bodies of the birches shone like slender nymphs through the dusk.

A little wind shook their leaves.

"No wonder," said Christopher, looking down at Anne, "that you wanted this. But tell me precisely why."

She tried to tell him, but found it difficult.

"I seem to find something here that I thought I had lost."

"What things?"

"Well, guardian angels. Do you believe in them?"

She spoke lightly, as if it were not in the least serious; but he felt that it was serious.

"I believe in all beautiful things."

"I used to think when I was a little girl that they were around me when I was asleep——

‘Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—  
Bless the bed that I lie on——’ ”

her laugh was a bit breathless—"but I don't believe in them any more. Ridgeley doesn't, you know. And it does seem silly——"

"Oh, no, it isn't——"

"Ridgeley feels that it is a bit morbid—and perhaps he is right. He says that we must eat and drink and—be merry," she flung out her hands with a little gesture of protest, "but he really isn't merry——"

"I see. He just eats and drinks?" He smiled at her.

"And works. And his work is—wonderful."

They sat down on a stone bench which had been hewn out of solid gray rock. "I wish Ridgeley had time to play," Anne said; "it would be nice for both of us——"

The amethyst light had gone, and the dusk descended. Anne's gray dress was merged into the gray of the rock. She seemed just voice, and phantom outline, and faint rose fragrance. Christopher recognized the scent. He had sent her a precious vial in a sandalwood box. Nothing had seemed to him too good for the wife of his old friend Dunbar.

"Life for you and Ridgeley," he told her, "should be something more than work or play—it should be infinite adventure."

"Yes. But Ridgeley hasn't time for adventure."

"Oh, he thinks he hasn't."

As Christopher talked after that Anne was not sure that he was in earnest. He complained that romance had fallen into disrepute.

"With all the modern stories—you know the formula—an ounce of sordidness, a flavor of sensationalism, a dash of sex——" One had to look back for the real thing—Aucassin and Nicolette and all the rest. "That's why I haven't married."

"Well, I have often wondered."

"If I loved a woman I should want to make her life all glow and color, and mine—with her——"

Anne's eyes were shining. What a big, pleasant boy he was! He seemed so young. He had a way of running his fingers up through his hair. She was aware of the gesture in the dark. Yes, she liked him; and she felt suddenly gay and light-hearted.

They talked until the stars shone in the tips of the birch trees. Ridgeley did not come, and when they went back to the house they found that he had been called to New York on an urgent case. He would not return until the following Friday.

Anne and Christopher were thus left together for a week to get acquainted. With only old Jeanette Ware to play propriety.

## II

It did not take Christopher long to decide that Ridgeley was no longer in love with his wife. "Of course he would call it love. But he could live just as

well without her. He has made a machine of himself."

He spoke to Dunbar one night about Anne. "Do you think she is perfectly well?"

"Why not?"

"There's a touch of breathlessness when we walk. Are you sure about her heart?"

"She has never been strong——" and that had seemed to be the end of it.

But it was not the end of it for Christopher. He watched Anne closely, and once when they climbed a hill together and she gave out, he carried her to the top. He managed to get his ear against her heart, and what he heard drained the blood from his face.

As for Anne, she thought how strong he was—and how fair his hair was with the sun upon it, for he had tucked his cap in his pocket.

That night Christopher again spoke to Ridgeley.

"Anne's in a bad way."

He told of the walk to the top of the hill. Ridgeley listened this time, and the next day he took Anne down into his office and did things to her.

"But I don't see why you are doing all this," she complained as he stuck queer instruments in his ears and made her draw long breaths while he listened.

"Christopher says you get tired when you walk."

"Well, I do. But there's nothing really the matter, is there?"

There was a great deal the matter, but there was no hint of it in his manner. If she had not been his wife he would probably have told her the truth—that she had a few months, perhaps a few years, ahead of her. He was apt to be frank with his patients, but he was not frank



with Anne. He had intended to tell Christopher at once, but Christopher was away for a week.

In the week that he was separated from her Christopher learned that he loved Anne; that he had been in love with her from the moment that she had stood among the birches—like one of them in her white slenderness—and had talked to him of guardian angels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He did not believe in saints, nor in the angels whose wings seemed to enfold Anne, but he believed in beauty—and Anne's seemed lighted from within, like an alabaster lamp.

Yet she was very human—and the girl in her and the boy in him had met in the weeks that he had spent with her. They had found a lot of things to do—they had fished in shallow brown streams, they had ridden through miles of lovely country. They had gone forth in search of adventure, and they had found it; in cherries on a tree by the road, and he had climbed the tree and had dropped them down to her, and she had hung them over her ears—— He had milked a cow in a pasture as they passed, and they had drunk the milk with their sandwiches, and had tied up a bill in Anne's fine handkerchief and had knotted it to the halter of the gentle, golden-eared Guernsey.

But they had found more than adventure—they had found romance—shining upon them everywhere. "If I were a gypsy to follow the road, and she could follow it with me," Christopher meditated as he sat in the train on his way back to Anne.

But there was Anne's husband, and Christopher's friend—and more than all there were all the specters of modern life—all the hideous wheels which must turn if

Anne were ever to be his—treachery to Ridgeley—the divorce court—and then, himself and Anne living the aftermath, facing perhaps disillusion.

“Oh, not that!” Christopher told himself. “She’d never grow less, never anything less than she is, if she could once—care.”

For he did not know whether Anne cared or not. He might guess as he pleased, but there had not been a word between them.

Once more the thought flashed, “If I were a gypsy to follow the road——”

As his train sped through the countryside, he became aware of flaming billboards. A circus was showing in the towns. The fences fairly blazed with golden chariots, wild beasts, cheap gods and goddesses, clowns in frilled collars and peaked hats. He remembered a glorious day that he had spent as a boy.

“I’ll take Anne,” was his sudden decision.

He laughed to himself and spent the rest of the way in seeing her at it.

They would drink pink lemonade and there would be pop-corn balls, the entrancing smell of sawdust, the beat of the band. He hoped there would be a tom-tom and some of the dark people from the Far East.

He reached his destination at seven o’clock. Dunbar met him at the station. Anne sat with her husband, and Jeanette was in the back seat. Christopher had, therefore, a side view of Anne as she turned a little that she might talk to him. The glint of her bright hair under her gray sports hat, the light of welcome in her eyes——!

“I am going to take you to the circus to-morrow. Ridgeley, you’ll go too?”



Dunbar shook his head. "I've got to get back to town in the morning. And I'm not sure that the excitement will be good for Anne."

"Why not?" quickly. "Aren't you well, Anne?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "Ridgeley seems to think I'm not. But the circus can't hurt me."

Nothing more was said about it. Christopher decided to ask Ridgeley later. But the opportunity did not come until Anne had gone up-stairs, and Dunbar and Christopher were smoking a final cigar on the porch.

"What's the matter with her?" Christopher asked.

Dunbar told him, "She can't get well."

### III

Anne, getting ready for bed, on the evening of Christopher's arrival, felt unaccountably tired. His presence had been, perhaps, a bit over-stimulating. It was good to have him back. She scarcely dared admit to herself how good. After dinner she and Ridgeley and Christopher had walked down to the grove of birches. There had been a new moon, and she and Ridgeley had sat on the stone bench with Christopher at their feet. She had leaned her head against her husband's shoulder, and he had put his arm about her in the dark and had drawn her to him. He was rarely demonstrative, and his tenderness to-night had for some reason hurt her. She had learned to do without it.

She had talked very little, but Christopher had talked a great deal. She had been content to listen. He really told such wonderful things. He gave her to-night the

full story of her silver beads—how they had been filched from an ancient temple—and how he had bought them from the thief.

“Until I saw you wear them, I always had a feeling that they ought to go back to the temple—to the god who had perhaps worn them for a thousand years. If I had known which god, I might have carried them back, but the thief wouldn’t tell me.”

“It would have done no good to carry them back,” Ridgeley had said, “and they are nice for Anne.” His big hand had patted his wife’s shoulder.

“Oh”—Christopher had been eager—“I want you to hear those temple bells some day, Anne! Why won’t you take her, Dunbar? Next winter—drop your work and we’ll all go.”

“I’ve a fat chance of going.”

“Haven’t you made money enough?”

“It isn’t money. You know that. But my patients would set up a howl——”

“Let ’em howl. You’ve got a life of your own to live, and so has Anne.”

Dunbar had hesitated for a moment—then, “Anne’s better off here.”

Anne, thinking of these things as she got out of her dinner dress and into a sheer negligee of lace and faint blue, wondered why Ridgeley should think she was better off. She wanted to see the things of which Christopher had told her—to hear the temple bells in the dusk—the beat of the tom-tom on white nights.

She stood at the window looking out at the moon. She decided that she could not sleep. She would go down and get a book that she had left on the table. The

men were out-of-doors, on the porch; she heard the murmur of their voices.

The voices were distinct as she stood in the library, and Christopher's words came to her, "What's the matter with Anne?"

Then her husband's technical explanation, the scientific name which meant nothing to her, then the crashing climax, "She can't get well."

She gave a quick cry, and when the men got into the room, she was crumpled up on the floor.

Her husband reached her first.

"My dear," he said, "you heard?"

"Yes. Do you mean that I am—going to die, Ridgeley?"

There was of course no way out of it.

"It means, my dear, that I've got to take awfully good care of you. Your heart is bad."

Christopher interposed, "People live for years with a heart like that."

But her eyes sought her husband's.

"How long do they live?"

"Many months—perhaps years—without excitement."

This, then, had been the reason for his tenderness. He had known that she was going to die and was sorry. But for ten years she had wanted what he might have given her—what he couldn't give her now—warm life as she had dreamed of it. She drew a quivering breath.

"It isn't quite fair, is it?"

It didn't seem fair. The two doctors had faced much unfairness of the kind of which she complained. But it was the first time that for either of them it had come so close.

They had little comfort to give her, although they attempted certain platitudes, and presently Ridgeley carried her up to her room.

## IV

She insisted the next morning on going to the circus with Christopher. She had not slept well, and there were shadows under her eyes. The physician in Christopher warred with the man. "You ought to rest," he said at breakfast. Dunbar had gone to New York in accordance with his usual schedule. There were other lives to think of; and Anne, when he had looked in upon her that morning, had seemed almost shockingly callous.

"No, I don't want to stay in bed, Ridgeley. I am going to the circus. I shall follow your prescription—to eat and drink and be merry——"

"I don't think I have put it quite that way, Anne."

"You have. Quite. 'Death is death and life is life—so make the most of it.'"

Perhaps she was cruel. But he knew, too, that she was afraid. "My dear," he said gently, "if you can get any comfort out of your own ideas, it might be better."

"But you believe they are just my own ideas—you don't believe they are true?"

"I should like to think they were true."

"You ought to rest," said Christopher at the breakfast table.

"I ought not. There are to be no more oughts—ever——"

He nodded as if he understood, leaning elbows on the table.

"I am going to pack the days full," she went on. "Why not? I shall have only a few months, and then—annihilation." She flung her question at him, "You believe that, don't you?"

He evaded.

"We sleep, 'perchance to dream.'"

"I don't want to dream. They might be horrid dreams."

And then Jeanette came down and poured their coffee and asked about the news in the morning paper.

Dressed for her trip to the circus, Anne looked like a girl in her teens—white skirt and short green coat, stout sports shoes and white hat.

She wore her silver beads, and Christopher said, "I'm not sure that I should if I were you."

"Why not?"

"In such a crowd."

But she kept them on.

They motored to the circus grounds and came in out of the white glare to the cool dimness of the tent as if they had dived from the sun-bright surface of the sea. But there the resemblance ceased. Here was no silence, but blatant noise—roar and chatter and shriek, the beat of a tom-tom, the thin piping of a flute, the crash of a band.

But it was the thin piping which Christopher followed, guiding Anne with his hand on her arm.

Following the plaintive note, they came at last to the snake-charmer—an old man in a white turban. The snakes were in a covered basket. He sat with his feet under him and piped.

Christopher spoke to him in a strange tongue. The

pipng broke off abruptly and the man answered with eagerness. There was a quick interchange of phrases.

"I know his village," Christopher said; "he is going to show you his snakes."

A crowd gathered, but the snake-charmer saw only the big man who had spoken to his homesick heart, and the girl with the silver beads. He knew another girl who had had a string of beads like that—and they had brought her luck—a dark-skinned girl, his daughter. Her husband had bestowed the beads on her marriage night, and her first child had been a son.

He put the thin reed to his lips and blew upon it. The snakes lifted their heads. He drew them up and out of the basket, and put them through their fantastic paces. Then he laid aside his pipe, shut them in their basket, and spoke to Christopher.

"He says that no evil can touch you while you wear the beads," Christopher told Anne.

The old man, with his eyes on her intent face, spoke again.

"What you think is evil—cannot be evil," Christopher interpreted. "The gods know best."

They moved towards the inner tent.

"Are you tired?" Christopher asked. "We don't have to stay."

"I want to stay." And so they went in, and presently with a blare of trumpets the great parade began.

They looked down on men and women in Roman chariots, men on horseback, women on horseback, on elephants, on camels, painted ladies in howdahs, painted ladies in sedan chairs—Cleopatra, Pompadour—history reduced to pantomime, color imposed upon color, glitter



upon glitter, the beat of the tom-tom, the crash of the band, the thin piping as the white-turbaned snake charmer showed in the press of the crowd.

Christopher's eyes went to Anne. She was leaning forward, one hand clasping the silver beads. He would have given much to know what was in her mind. How little she was, and how young! Oh, he wanted to get her away from the thing which hung suspended over her like a keen-edged sword!

But to get her away—how? He could never get her away from her thoughts. Unless——

Suddenly he heard her laughing. Two clowns were performing with a lot of little dogs. One of the dogs was a poodle who played the fool. "What a darling," Anne was saying.

There was more than they could look at—each ring seemed a separate circus—one had to have more than a single pair of eyes. Christopher was blind to it all—except when Anne insisted, "Look—look!"

Six acrobats were in the ring—four men and two women. Their tights were of a clear shimmering blue, with silver trunks. One could not tell the women from the men, except by their curled heads, and their smaller stature. They were strong, wholesome, healthy. Christopher knew the quality of that health—hearts that pumped like machines—obedient muscles under satin skins. One of the women whirled in a series of handsprings, like a blue balloon—her body as fluid as quicksilver. If he could only borrow one-tenth of that endurance for Anne—he might keep her for years.

Then came Pantaloon, and Harlequin and Columbine.

The old man was funny, but the youth and the girl were exquisite—he, diamond-spangled and lean as a lizard, she in tulle skirts and wreath of flowers. They did all the old tricks of masks and slapping sticks, of pursuit and retreat, but they did them so beautifully that Anne and Christopher sat spellbound—what they were seeing was not two clever actors on a sawdust stage, but love in its springtime—girl and boy—dreams, rapture, radiance!

Then in a moment Columbine was dead, and Harlequin wept over her. Frost had killed the flower, love and life were at an end.

Christopher's face was white. Anne was tense. But now—Columbine was on her feet and Harlequin was blowing kisses to the audience!

"Let's get out of this," Christopher said almost roughly, and led Anne down the steps and into the almost deserted outer tent. They looked for the snake charmer, but he was gone.

"Eating rice somewhere, or saying his prayers," Christopher surmised.

"How could he know about the gods?" Anne asked as they drove home.

"They know a great deal—these old men of the East," Christopher told her, and talked for the rest of the way about the strange people among whom he had spent so many years.

## V

Ridgeley did not come home to dinner. He telephoned that he would be late. It was close and warm. Chris-



topher, sitting with Anne and Jeanette on the porch, decided that a storm was brewing.

Anne was restless. She went down into the garden, and Christopher followed her. She wore white, and he was aware of the rose scent. He picked a rose for her as he passed through the garden. "Bend your head, and I'll put it in your hair."

"I can't wear pink."

"It is white in the dusk——" He put his hands on her shoulders, stopped her, and stuck the rose behind her ear. Then he let her go.

They came to the grove of birches, and sat down on the stone seat. It had grown dark, and the lightning flashing up from the horizon gave to the birches a spectral whiteness—Anne was a silver statue.

"It was queer," she said, "about the old man at the circus."

"About the beads?"

"Yes. I wonder what he meant, Christopher? '*What you think is evil—cannot be evil*'? Do you think he meant—Death?"

He did not answer at once, then he said, abruptly, "Anne, how did it happen that you and Ridgeley drifted apart?"

"Oh, it's hard to tell."

"But tell me."

"Well, when we were first married, I expected so much . . . things that girls dream about—that he would always have me in his thoughts and that our lives would be knit together. I think we both tried hard to have it that way. I used to ride with him on his rounds, and he would tell me about his patients. And at night

I'd wait up for him, and we'd have something to eat, and it was—heavenly. Ridgeley was so fine. But his practice got so big, and sometimes he wouldn't say a word when I rode with him. And he would be so late coming in at night, and he'd telephone that I'd better go to bed, and—well, that was the beginning. I don't think it is really his fault or mine. It's just life."

"It isn't life, and you know it"—passionately. "Anne, if you had married me, do you think——" He reached out in the dark and took her hand. "Oh, my dear, we might as well talk it out!"

She withdrew her hand.

"Talk what out?"

"You know. I've learned to care for you an awful lot. I had planned to go away, but I can't go now—and leave you to face things alone."

He heard her quick breath.

"I've got to face them!"

"But not alone! Anne, do you remember what you said this morning—that you were going to pack the days full? And you can't do that without some one to help you. And Ridgeley won't help. Anne, let me do it. Let me take you away from here . . . away from Ridgeley. We will go where we can hear the temple bells. We'll ride through the desert . . . we'll set our sails for strange harbors. We'll love until we forget everything, but the day, the hour,—the moment! And when the time comes for endless dreams . . ."

"Christopher . . ."

"Anne, listen."

"You mustn't say things like that to me . . . you must not . . . !"

"I must. I want you to have happiness. We'll crowd more into a few short months than some people have in a lifetime. And you have a right to it."

"Would it be happiness?"

"Why not? In a way we are all pushing death ahead of us. Who knows that he will be alive to-morrow? There's this arm of mine . . . there's every chance that I'll have trouble with it. And an automobile accident may wreck a honeymoon. You've as much time as thousands who are counting on more."

The lightning flashed and showed the birches writhing.

"But afterward, Christopher, *afterward* . . . ?"

"Well, if it is Heaven, we'll have each other; and if it is hell—there were Paolo and Francesca; and if it is sleep, I'll dream eternally of you! Anne—Anne, do you love me enough to do it?"

"Christopher, please!"

But the storm was upon them—rain and wind, and the thunder a cannonade. Christopher, brought at last to the knowledge of its menace, picked Anne up in his arms and ran for shelter. When they reached the house they found Ridgeley there. He was stern.

"It was a bad business to keep her out. She's afraid of storms."

"Were you afraid?" Christopher asked her as Ridgeley went to look after the awnings.

"I forgot the storm," she said, and did not meet his eyes.

## VI

Lying awake in her wide bed, Anne thought it over. She was still shaken by Christopher's vehemence. She

had believed him her friend and had found him her lover—and, oh, he had brought youth back to her! If he left her now, how could she stand it—the days with no one but Jeanette Ware and the soul-shaking knowledge of what was ahead? And Ridgeley wouldn't care—much. In a week he'd be swallowed up by his work.

She tried to read, but found it difficult. Across each page flamed Christopher's sentences . . . "We'll ride through the desert. . . . We'll set our sails for strange harbors. . . ."

Was that what the old man had meant at the circus . . . "What you think is evil—cannot be evil"? Would Christopher give her all that she had hoped of Ridgeley? If she lived to be eighty, she and Ridgeley would—jog. Was Christopher right—"You'll have more happiness in a few months than some people in a lifetime"?

She heard her husband moving about in the next room, the water booming in his bath. A thin line of light showed under his door.

She shut her book and turned out her lamp. The storm had died down and the moon was up. Through the open window she could see beyond the garden to the grove of birches.

Hitherto, the thought of the little grove had been as of a sanctuary. She was aware, suddenly, that it had become a place of contending forces. Were the guardian angels driven out . . . ?

*But there weren't any guardian angels!* Ridgeley had said that they were silly. And Christopher didn't believe in them. She wished that her mother might have lived to talk it over. Her mother had had no doubts.

The door of her husband's room opened, and he was

silhouetted against the light. Coming up to the side of her bed, he found her wide-eyed.

"Can't you sleep, my dear?"

"No."

"I don't want to give you anything."

"I don't want anything."

He sat down by the side of the bed. He had on his blue bath robe, and the open neck showed his strong white throat.

"Anne," he said, "I've been thinking of what you said this morning—about my lack of belief and the effect it has had on you—and I'm sorry."

"Being sorry doesn't help any, does it, Ridgeley?"

"I should like to think that you have your old faiths to—comfort you."

She had no answer for that, and presently he said, "Are you warm enough?" and brought an extra blanket, because the air was cool after the storm; and then he bent and kissed her forehead. "Shut your eyes and sleep if you can."

But of course she couldn't sleep. She lay there for hours, weighing what he had said to her against what Christopher had said. Each man was offering her something—Christopher, life at the expense of all her scruples; Ridgeley, the resurrection of burned-out beliefs.

She shivered a bit under the blanket. It would be heavenly to hear the temple bells—with youth beside her. To drink the wine of life from a brimming cup. But all the time she would be afraid. Nothing could take away that fear. Nothing, nothing, *nothing*.

She was glad that her husband was awake. The thin

line of light still showed beneath his door. It would be dreadful to be alone—in the dark. At last she could stand it no longer. She got out of bed, wrapped herself in a robe that lay at the foot of it, and opened the door.

“May I leave it open?”

As her husband turned in his chair, she saw his hand go quickly, as if to cover the paper on which he was writing. “Of course, my dear. Are you afraid?”

“I am always afraid, Ridgeley. Always——”

She put her hands up to her face and began to cry. He came swiftly toward her and took her in his arms. “Hush,” he said, “nothing can hurt you, Anne.”

## VII

When she waked in the morning, it was with the remembrance of his tenderness. Well, of course he was sorry for her. Anybody would be. But Christopher was sorry, too. And Christopher had something to offer her—more than Ridgeley. Yes, it was more.

She was half afraid to go downstairs. Christopher would be at breakfast on the porch. Jeanette would be there, pouring coffee, and perhaps Ridgeley if he had no calls. And Christopher would talk in his gay young voice, and Ridgeley would read the newspaper, and she and Christopher would make their plans for the day.

She rose and began to dress, but found herself suddenly panic-stricken at the thought of the plans that Christopher might make. If they motored together, he would talk to her as he had talked in the grove of birches—of the temple bells and of the desert and the



strange harbors; and how could she be sure that she would be strong enough to resist?

And what if she listened and let him have his way?

She decided to eat her breakfast in bed, and rang for it. A note came up from Christopher:

"Don't stay upstairs. Ridgeley left hours ago, and I shan't enjoy my toast and bacon if you aren't opposite me. I have picked a white rose to put by your plate, and I have a thousand things to say to you."

His words had a tonic effect. Oh, why not? What earthly difference would it make? And what was it that Browning had said—"Who knows but the world may end to-night?"

She was not sure that was quite the way that Browning had put it, and she thought she would like to be sure—she could almost see herself saying it to Christopher.

So she went into her husband's room to get the book.

Ridgeley's books were on the shelf above his desk. They had nothing to do with his medical library—that was downstairs in his office, and now and then he would bring up a great volume. But he had a literary side, and he had revealed some of it to Anne in the days before he had been too busy. His Browning was marked, and it was not hard to find *The Last Ride*. She opened at the right page, and stood reading—an incongruous figure amid Ridgeley's masculine belongings in her sheer negligee of faint blue.

She closed the book, put it back on the shelf, and was moving away, when her eyes were caught by two words—"For Anne," at the top of a sheet of paper which lay on Ridgeley's desk. The entire page was filled with



Ridgeley's neat professional script, and in a flash the gesture which he had made the night before returned to her, as if he were trying to hide something from her gaze.

She bent and read . . .

Oh, was this the way he had spent the hours of the night? Searching for words which might comfort her, might clear away her doubts, might bring hope to her heart? And he had found what he had sought.

"My little sister, Death," said good Saint Francis. "The darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as day; the darkness and light to thee are both alike." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow——" These and many other truths which had once been a part of her.

She read avidly. Oh, she had been thirsty—for this! Hungry—for this! And Ridgeley—— The tears dripped so that she could hardly see the lines. She laid her cheek against the paper and her tears blistered it. She carried it into her room. Christopher's note still lay on her pillow. She read it again, but she had no ears now for its call.

She rang for her maid.

"I shall stay in bed and write some letters."

She wrote to Christopher, after many attempts:

"We have been such good, good friends. And we mustn't spoil it. Perhaps if you could go away for a time, it would be best for both of us. I am going to believe that some day you will find great happiness. And you would never have found happiness with me; you would have found only fear. And I know now what the old man meant about the beads—'What you

think is evil—cannot be evil.’ Christopher, death isn’t evil if it isn’t the end of things. And I am going to believe that it is not the end . . .”

Christopher went into town before lunch, and later Anne sat alone on the stone bench in her grove of birches. They were serene and still in the gold of the afternoon. Yet last night they had writhed in the storm. She, too, had been swept by a storm. . . . She missed her playmate—but she had a sense of relief in the absence of her tempestuous lover.

Ridgeley came home that night with news of Christopher’s sudden departure. “He found telegrams. He told me to say ‘good-bye’ to you.”

“I am sorry,” Anne said, and meant it. Sorry that it had to be—but being sorry could not change it.

After dinner Ridgeley had a call to make, and Anne went up to bed. But she was awake when her husband came in, and the thin line of light showed. She waited until she heard the boom of water in his bath, and then she slipped out of bed and opened the door between. She was propped up in her pillows when he reappeared in his blue bathrobe.

“Hello,” he called, “did you want me?”

“Yes, Ridgeley.”

He came in. “Anything the matter?”

“No, I am not sick. But I want to talk.”

“About what?”

“This.”

She showed him the paper with its caption, “For Anne.”

“Ridgeley, did you write it because I was—afraid?”

Her hand went out to him. His own went over it.

"I think I wrote it because I was afraid."

"You?"

His grip almost hurt her.

"My dear, my dear, I haven't believed in things! How could I, with all the facts that men like me have to deal with? But when I faced—losing you—Anne, love's got to be eternal."

"Ridgeley——"

"I won't—lose you! Oh, I know! We've grown apart! I don't know how a man is going to help it in this darned whirlpool. But you've always been right here. I've felt I might have you if I ever had time." His voice broke.

"And I thought you didn't care."

"I was afraid of that, and somehow I couldn't go back to where we began. I was always thinking I would. And then this came! I always hated to kill the things that you believed, Anne. I thought I had to be honest; that it would be better for you to face the truth . . . But which one of us knows the Truth? Not a man among us. And I came across this . . . *'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. . . .'* We are all fools—the wisest of us. . . ."

She held out her arms to him, and he gathered her close. She felt that it had been a thousand years since she had prayed, yet she heard herself speaking . . . And when he laid her back upon her pillows, she was aware that together they had approached some height from which they would never again descend.

"I'll leave the door open," he said, as he left her. "I shall be reading, and you can see the light."

It seemed as if the light from his room flooded the

world. The four posts of her bed once more were tipped with shining saints! She turned on her pillow—beyond the garden, the grove of white birches was steeped in celestial radiance.

*"My little sister, Death,"* said good St. Francis.

With her hand under her cheek, she slept at last as peacefully as a child.

## THE DESPOILER \*

By GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

### I

FORREST paused when his explorations had brought him to the edge of the beechwood, all dappled with golden lights and umber shadows, and stood for a time brooding upon those intimate lawns and flowery gardens that seemed, as it were, but roofless extensions of the wide, open house.

It is probable that his brooding had in it an estimate of the cost of these things. It was thus that he had looked upon the blooded horses in the river-fields and the belted cattle in the meadows. It was thus that his grave eyes passed beyond the gardens and moved from corner to corner of the house, from sill to cornice, relating the porticos and interminable row of French windows to dollars and cents. He had, of course, been of one mind, and now he was of two; but that octagonal slug of California minting, by which he resolved his doubts, fell heads, and he stepped with an acquiescent reluctance from the dappled shadows into the full sunlight of the gardens and moved slowly, with a kind of awkward and cadaverous grandeur, toward the house.

\* From *The Spread Eagle and Other Stories*; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission of the publishers.

He paused by the sundial to break a yellow rose from the vine out of which its fluted supporting column emerged. So standing, and regarding the rose slowly twirled in his fingers, he made a dark contrast to the brightly colored gardens. His black cape hung in unbroken lines from his gaunt shoulders to his knees, and his face had the modeling and the gentle gloom of Dante's.

The rose fell from his hand, and he moved onward through the garden and entered the house as nonchalantly as if it had been his own. He found himself in a cool dining-room, with a great chimney-piece and beaded white paneling. The table was laid for seven, and Forrest's intuitive good taste caused his eyes to rest with more than passing interest upon the stately loving-cup, full of roses, that served for a centerpiece. But from its rosy garlands caught up in the mouths of demon-heads he turned suddenly to the portrait over the chimney-piece. It was darker and more sedate than the pictures to which Forrest was accustomed, but, in effect, no darker or more sedate than himself. The gentleman of the portrait, a somewhat pouchy-cheeked, hook-nosed Revolutionary, in whose wooden and chalky hand was a rolled document, seemed to return Forrest's glance with a kind of bored courtesy.

"That is probably the Signer," thought Forrest, and he went closer. "A great buck in your time," he approved.

The butler entered the dining-room from the pantry, and, though a man accustomed to emergencies, was considerably nonplused at the sight of the stranger. That the stranger was a bona fide stranger, James, who had

served the Ballins for thirty years, knew; but what manner of stranger, and whether a rogue or a man upon legitimate business, James could not so much as guess.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said; "were you looking for some one?"

"Yes," said Forrest, perfectly at his ease, "and no."

"Shall I tell Mr. Ballin that you are here, sir?"

"I shall find him for myself, thank you," said Forrest, and he moved toward an open door that seemed to lead into the hall.

"By the way," he said, "there will be an extra at luncheon."

Very stately in his long, black cape, and with his pensive Dantesque face, Forrest continued on his slow progress to the open door and went out of the dining-room. He crossed the hall with half an eye to its quiet tones and bowls of roses, and entered a room of bright chintz with a pattern of corn-flowers, and full of sunlight. It was a very spacious room, and lively—a proper link between the gardens and the house; and here were many photographs in silver frames of smart men and women; and the Sunday papers with their colored supplements were strewn in disorder upon the floor. And it seemed to Forrest, so comfortable and intimate did it look, as if that room had been a part of his own life. Upon the blotter of a writing-table sprawled a check-book bound in yellow leather. And when Forrest saw that, he smiled. It came as a surprise that the teeth in that careworn face should be white and even. And in those rare and charming moments of his smiling he looked like a young man who has made many engagements with life which he proposes to fulfill, instead of



like a man for whom the curious years reserve but one sensation more.

But Forrest did not remain any appreciable time in the cheerful living-room. A desire to explain and have it all over with was upon him; and he passed, rapidly now, from room to room, until in a far corner of the house he entered a writing-room furnished in severe simplicity with dark and dully shining rosewood. This room was of an older fashion than any he had yet entered, and he guessed that it had been the Signer's workshop and had been preserved by his descendants without change. A pair of flintlock pistols, glinting silver, lay upon the desk; quill pens stood in a silver cup full of shot; a cramped map, drawn and colored by hand and yellow with age, hung above the mantel and purported, in bold printing with flourishes, to be The Proposed Route for the Erie Canal. Portraits of General Greene and Thomas Jefferson, by Stuart, also hung upon the walls. And there stood upon an octagonal table a bowl of roses.

There was a gentleman in the embrasure of a window, smoking a cigar and looking out. But at the sound of Forrest's step he turned an alert, close-cropped, gray head and stepped out of the embrasure.

"Mr. Ballin?" said Forrest.

"I am Mr. Ballin." His eyes perused the stranger with astonishing speed and deftness, without seeming to do so.

"It was the toss of a coin that decided me to come," said Forrest. "I have asked your butler to lay a place for me at luncheon."

So much assumption on the part of a stranger has a

cheeky look in the printing. Yet Forrest's tone and manner far more resembled those of old friendship and intimacy than impertinence.

"Have I," said Ballin, smiling a little doubtfully, "ever had the pleasure of meeting you before? I have a poor memory for faces. But it seems to me that I should not have forgotten yours."

"You never saw me but the one time," said Forrest. "That was many years ago, and you would not remember. You were a—little wild that night. You sat against me at a game of faro. But even if you had been yourself—I have changed very much. I was at that time, as you were, little more than a boy."

"Good Lord!" said Ballin, "were you a part of that hectic flush that to myself I only refer to as 'Sacramento'?"

"You do not look as if it had turned you into a drinking man," said Forrest.

"It didn't," said Ballin, and without seeing any reason for confiding in the stranger he proceeded to do so. "It was nip and tuck for a time," he said, "and then money came to me, and this old place and responsibilities, and I became, more from force of circumstances than from any inner impulse, a decentish citizen."

"The money made everything smooth, did it?" said Forrest. "I wonder."

"You wonder—what?" said Ballin.

"If it could—money alone. I have had it at times—not as you have had it—but in large, ready sums. Yet I think it made very little difference."

"What have you been doing since—Sacramento?" asked Ballin.

"Up to a month ago," said Forrest, "I kept on dealing—in different parts of the world—in San Francisco, in London—Cairo—Calcutta. And then the matter which brings me here was brought to my attention."

"Yes?" said Ballin, a little more coolly.

"When you were in Sacramento," Forrest went on quietly and evenly, as if stating an acknowledged fact, "you did not expect to come into all this. Then your cousin, Ranger Ballin, and his son went down in the City of Pittsburgh; and all this"—he made a sudden, sweeping gesture with one of his long, well-kept hands—"came to you."

"Yes?" Ballin's voice still interrogated coolly.

Forrest broke into that naïve, boyish smile of his.

"My dear sir," said he, "I saw a play last winter in which the question is asked, 'Do you believe in Fairies?' I ask you, 'Do you believe in Gypsies?'"

"In what way?" Ballin asked, and he, too, smiled.

"Ranger Ballin," said Forrest, "had another son who was spirited away in childhood by the gypsies. That will explain this visit, which on the face of it is an impertinence. It will explain why I have entered this house without knocking, and have invited myself to luncheon. You see, sir, all this"—and again he made the sudden, sweeping gesture—"is mine."

It speaks for Forrest's effect that, although reason told Ballin to doubt this cataclysmic statement, instinct convinced him that it was true. Yet what its truth might mean to him did not so convincingly appear. That he might be ousted from all that he looked on as his own did not yet occur to him, even vaguely.

"Then we are cousins," he said simply, and held out his hand. But Forrest did not take it at once.

"Do you understand what cousinship with me means to you?" he said.

"Why," said Ballin, "if you *are* my cousin"—he tried to imply the doubt that he by no means felt—"there is surely enough for us both."

"Enough to make up for the years when there has been nothing?" Forrest smiled.

"It is a matter for lawyers to discuss, then," said Ballin quietly. "Personally, I do not doubt that you believe yourself to be my cousin's son. But there is room, surely, in others for many doubts."

"Not in others," said Forrest, "who have been taught to know that two and two are four."

"Have you documentary proof of this astonishing statement?" said Ballin.

"Surely," said Forrest. And he drew from an inner pocket a bundle of documents bound with a tape. Ballin ran a perturbed but deft eye through them, while Forrest stood motionless, more like a shadow than a man. Then, presently, Ballin looked up with a staunch, honorable look.

"I pick no flaws here, Cousin," he said. "I—I congratulate you."

"Cousin," said Forrest, "it has been my business in life to see others take their medicine. But I have never seen so great a pill swallowed so calmly. Will you offer me your hand now?"

Ballin offered his hand grimly.

Then he tied the documents back into their tape and offered the bundle to Forrest.

"I am a careless man," said Forrest; "I might lose them. May I ask you to look after them for me?"

"Would you leave me alone with them?" asked Ballin.

"Of course," said Forrest.

Ballin opened an old-fashioned safe in the paneling and locked it upon the despoiling documents. Yet his heart, in spite of its dread and bitterness, was warmed by the trustfulness of the despoiler.

"And now what?" he said.

"And now," said Forrest, "remember for a little while only that I am, let us say, an old friend of your youth. Forget for the present, if you can, who else I am, and what my recrudescence must mean to you. It is not a happiness"—he faltered with his winning smile—"to give pain."

## II

"Your father," said Forrest, "says that I may have his seat at the head of the table. You see, Miss Dorothy, in the world in which I have lived there were no families. And I have the strongest desire to experiment in some of those things which I have missed. . . . Ballin," he exclaimed, "how lovely your daughters are!"

The young Earl of Moray glanced up mischievously.

"Do you think, sir," he drawled, "that I have made the best selection under the circumstances? Sometimes I think I ought to have made up to Ellen instead of Dorothy."

"What's the matter with *us*?" said Alice, and she laid her hand upon Evelyn's.

"Oh, you little rotters!" exclaimed the earl, whom

they sometimes teased to the point of agony. "No man in his senses would look at *you*."

"Right-o!" said young Stephen Ballin, who made the eighth at table. "They're like germs," he explained to Forrest—"very troublesome to deal with."

"It's because we're twins," said Evelyn. "Everybody who isn't twins is down on them."

"It's because they are always beautiful and good," said Alice. "Why don't you stand up for us, Father?"

It was noticed that Mr. Ballin was not looking well; that the chicken *mousse* upon his plate was untouched, and that he fooled with his bread, breaking it, crumbling it, and rolling it into pellets. He pulled himself together and smiled upon his beloved twins.

Forrest had turned to the Earl of Moray.

"Was it your ancestor," he said, "who 'was a bra' gallant, and who raid at the gluve'?"

"I am confident of it," said the young Englishman.

"By all accounts," said Forrest, "he would have been a good hand with a derring. Have you that gift for games?"

"I'm a very good golfer," said the earl, "but I thought a derring was a kind of dish that babies ate gruel out of." He blushed becomingly.

"As ever," said Alice, "insular and ignorant."

"You prickly baby!" exclaimed the earl. "What is a derring, Mr. Forrest?"

Forrest, having succeeded in drawing the attention of his immediate and prospective family from the ill looks of Mr. Ballin, proposed to keep his advantage.

"I will show you," he said. "Are my hands empty?"



"Quite so," said the earl.

"Keep your eyes on them," said Forrest, "so. Now, we will suppose that you have good reason to believe that I have stolen your horse. Call me a horse thief."

"Sir," said the earl, entering into the spirit of the game, "you are a horse thief!"

There appeared in Forrest's right hand, which had seemed empty, which had seemed not to move or to perform in any celeritous and magic manner, a very small, stubby, nickel pistol, with a caliber much too great for it, and down whose rifled muzzle the earl found himself gazing. The earl was startled. But he said, "I was mistaken, sir; you are not a horse thief." As mysteriously as it had come, the wicked little derringer disappeared. Forrest's hands remained innocently in plain view of all.

"Oh," said Alice, "if you had only pulled the trigger!" Evelyn giggled.

"Frankly, Mr. Forrest," said the earl, "aren't the twins loathsome? But tell me, can you shoot that thing as magically as you play tricks with it?"

"It's not a target gun," said Forrest. "It's for instantaneous work at close range. One could probably hit a tossed coin with it, but one must have more weight and inches to the barrel and less explosion for fine practice."

"What would you call fine practice?" asked Stephen.

"Oh," said Forrest, "a given leg of a fly at twenty paces, or to snip a wart from a man's hand at twenty-five."

Mr. Ballin rose.



"I'm not feeling well," he said simply; "when the young people have finished with you, Forrest, you will find me in the Signer's room." He left the table and the room, very pale and shaky, for by this time the full meaning of Forrest's incontestable claim had clarified in his brain. He saw himself as if struck down by sudden poverty—of too long leisure and too advanced in years to begin life with any chance of success. His symptoms were not unlike inactive nausea. And when he was beyond the reach of his family's eyes he began to lurch in his walk. When he reached the Signer's room he had out the documents that Forrest had handed to him, and went through them very carefully, praying for doubt. It is good to know that it did not even occur to him to destroy them.

Meantime, Forrest, who felt that Mr. Ballin's indisposition had put a certain constraint upon the party, exerted himself to entertain the young people. He had no great store of wit, but a vast knowledge of the life that was outside their pale. And he told them tales of sudden deaths by shooting and the rope; of rich bodies of ore struck in the last moment of despair; and he told them of Homeric deeds and curious runs of cards. In particular, the Earl of Moray, whose life had been as carefully ordered as one of the clipped yews of his own Castle Stuart, was fascinated by the gentle wording and the colossal episodes of the gambler's talk. And the gambler warmed to the eager queries and to the sinless young face of the Stuart.

When luncheon was over, they went into the living-room, the earl keeping close to the gambler, as if he feared to lose him. In a corner of the living-room, open

and inviting, was a grand piano. It caught Forrest's eye, and he turned to Dorothy.

"Your young man, Miss Dorothy," he said, "had a cousin, a very distant cousin, whom I used to know in the West—Charles Stuart; he had the face of the first Charles, and, like him, the devil's own luck. But he had a voice of pure gold, and the little children went to him as iron filings to a magnet. It was from him that I learned about the Earl of Moray who 'raid at the gluve.' "

Without any more words Forrest crossed to the piano and sat down at it. He struck a splendid, wide-open chord in the base, and began to sing in a clear, ringing voice, wonderful with conviction and tragedy:

"Ye highlands and ye lawlands,  
Oh, where hae ye been?  
They ha' slain the Earl o' Moray,  
And ha' laid him on the green.

"He was a bra' gallant,  
And he raid at the gluve,  
And the bonnie Earl o' Moray  
He was the Queen's love.

"He was a bra' gallant,  
And he raid at the ring,  
And the bonnie Earl o' Moray,  
Oh, he might ha' been a king.

"Lang, lang will his lady look  
Out o'er the castle down,  
Ere she see the Earl o' Moray  
Come soundin' thro' the town."

Forrest finished as abruptly as he had begun and rose from the piano. But for a few charged moments even the twins were silent.

"He used to sing that song," said Forrest, "so that the cold chills went galloping the length of a man's spine. He was as like you to look at," he turned to the earl, "as one star is like another. I cannot tell you how it has moved me to meet you. We were in a place called Grub Gulch, placer-mining—half a dozen of us. I came down with the scarlet fever. The others bolted, all but Charlie Stuart. He stayed. But by the time I was up, thanks to him, he was down—thanks to me. He died of it." Forrest finished very gravely.

"Good Lord!" said the earl.

"*He* might ha' been a king," said Forrest. And he swallowed the lump that rose in his throat, and turned away so that his face could not be seen by them.

But, presently, he flashed about with his winning smile. "What would all you rich young people do if you hadn't a sou in the world?"

"Good Lord!" said Stephen, "everything I know how to do decently costs money."

"I feel sure," said Alice, her arm about Evelyn's waist, "that our beauty and goodness would see *us* through."

"I," said Ellen, "would quietly curl up and die."

"I," said Dorothy, "would sell my earl to the highest bidder."

"I shouldn't bring tuppence," said the earl.

"But you," said Forrest to the earl, "what would you do if you were stone-broke?"

"I would marry Dorothy to-morrow," said the earl, "instead of waiting until September. Fortunately, I have a certain amount of assets that the law won't allow me to get rid of."

"I wish you could," said Forrest.

"Why?" The earl wrinkled his eyebrows.

"I would like to see what you would do." He laid his hand lightly upon the young Englishman's shoulder. "You don't mind? I am an old man," he said, "but I cannot tell you—what meeting you has meant to me. I want you to come with me now, for a few minutes, to Mr. Ballin. Will you?"

### III

"Mr. Ballin," said Forrest, his hand still on the earl's shoulder, "I want you to tell this young man what only you and I know."

Ballin looked up from his chair with the look of a sick man.

"It's this, Charlie," he said in a voice that came with difficulty. "It's a mistake to suppose that I am a rich man. Everything in this world that I honestly thought belonged to me belongs to Mr. Forrest."

The earl read truth in the ashen, careworn face of his love's father.

"But surely," he said anxiously, "Dorothy is still yours—to give."

Forrest's dark and brooding countenance became as if suddenly brightly lighted.

"My boy—my boy!" he cried, and he folded the

wriggling and embarrassed Stuart in his long, gaunt arms.

I think an angel bringing glad tidings might have looked as Forrest did when, releasing the Earl of Moray, he turned upon the impulse and began to pour out words to Ballin.

"When I found out who I was," he said, "and realized for how long—oh, my Lord! how long—others had been enjoying what was mine, and that I had rubbed myself bare and bleeding against all the rough places of life, will you understand what a rage and bitterness against you all possessed me? And I came—oh, on wings—to trample, and to dispossess, and to sneer, and to send you packing. . . . But first the peace of the woods and the meadows, and the beech wood and the gardens, and the quiet hills and the little brooks staggered me. And then you—the way you took it, Cousin!—all pale and wretched as you were; you were so calm, and you admitted the claim at once—and bore up. . . . Then I began to repent of the bitterness in which I had come. . . . And I left the papers in your keeping. . . . I thought—for I have known mostly evil—that, perhaps, you would destroy them. . . . It never entered your head. . . . You are clean white—and so are your girls and your boy. . . . I did not expect to find white people in possession. Why should I? . . . But I said, 'Surely the Englishman isn't white—he is after the money.' But right away I began to have that feeling, too, smoothed out of me. . . . And now, when he finds that instead of Dorothy being an heiress she is a pauper, he says, 'But surely, Dorothy is still yours to give!'

"I was a fool to come. Yet I am glad."

Neither Ballin nor the earl spoke.

"Could I have this room to myself for a little while?" asked Forrest.

"Of course," said Ballin; "it is yours."

Forrest bowed; the corners of his mouth turned a little upward.

"Will you come back in an hour—you, alone, Cousin?"

Ballin nodded quietly.

"Come along, Charlie," he said, and together they left the room. But when Ballin returned alone, an hour later, the room was empty. Upon the Signer's writing-desk was a package addressed collectively to "The Ballins," and in one corner was written, "Blood will tell."

The package, on being opened, proved to contain nothing more substantial than ashes. And by the donor thereof there was never given any further sign.

## VAN BIBBER AND THE SWAN-BOATS \*

By RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

It was very hot in the Park, and young Van Bibber, who had a good heart and a great deal more money than good-hearted people generally get, was cross and somnolent. He had told his groom to bring a horse he wanted to try to the Fifty-ninth Street entrance at ten o'clock, and the groom had not appeared. Hence Van Bibber's crossness.

He waited as long as his dignity would allow, and then turned off into a by-lane and dropped on a bench and looked gloomily at the Lohengrin swans with the paddle-wheel attachment that circle around the lake. They struck him as the most idiotic inventions he had ever seen, and he pitied, with the pity of a man who contemplates crossing the ocean to be measured for his fall clothes, the people who could find delight in having some one paddle them around an artificial lake.

Two little girls from the East Side, with a lunch basket, and an older girl with her hair down her back, sat down on a bench beside him and gazed at the swans.

The place was becoming too popular, and Van Bibber decided to move on. But the bench on which he sat was in the shade, and the asphalt walk leading to the

\* From *Gallagher and Other Stories*; copyrighted, 1891, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission of the publishers.



street was in the sun, and his cigarette was soothing, so he ignored the near presence of the three little girls, and remained where he was.

"I s'pose," said one of the two little girls, in a high, public school voice, "there's lots to see from those swan-boats that you'se can't see from the banks."

"Oh, lots," assented the girl with long hair.

"If you walked all round the lake, clear all the way round, you could see all there is to see," said the third, "except what there's in the middle where the island is."

"I guess it's mighty wild on that island," suggested the youngest.

"Eddie Case he took a trip around the lake on a swan-boat the other day. He said that it was grand. He said you'se could see fishes and ducks, and that it looked just as if there were snakes and things on the island."

"What sort of things?" asked the other one, in a hushed voice.

"Well, wild things," explained the elder, vaguely; "bears and animals like that, that grow in wild places."

Van Bibber lit a fresh cigarette, and settled himself comfortably and unreservedly to listen.

"My, but I'd like to take a trip just once," said the youngest, under her breath. Then she clasped her fingers together and looked up anxiously at the elder girl, who glanced at her with severe reproach.

"Why, Mame!" she said; "ain't you ashamed! Ain't you having a good time nuff without wishing for everything you set your eyes on?"

Van Bibber wondered at this—why humans should want to ride around on the swans in the first place, and

why, if they had such a wild desire, they should not gratify it.

"Why, it costs more'n it costs to come all the way up town in an open car," added the elder girl, as if in answer to his unspoken question.

The younger girl sighed at this, and nodded her head in submission, but blinked longingly at the big swans and the parti-colored awning and the red seats.

"I beg your pardon," said Van Bibber, addressing himself uneasily to the eldest girl with long hair, "but if the little girl would like to go around in one of those things, and—and hasn't brought the change with her, you know, I'm sure I should be very glad if she'd allow me to send her around."

"Oh! will you?" exclaimed the little girl, with a jump, and so sharply and in such a shrill voice that Van Bibber shuddered. But the elder girl objected.

"I'm afraid maw wouldn't like our taking money from any one we didn't know," she said with dignity; "but if you're going anyway and want company——"

"Oh! my, no," said Van Bibber, hurriedly. He tried to picture himself riding around the lake behind a tin swan with three little girls from the East Side and a lunch basket.

"Then," said the head of the trio, "we can't go."

There was such a look of uncomplaining acceptance of this verdict on the part of the two little girls, that Van Bibber felt uncomfortable. He looked to the right and to the left, and then said desperately, "Well, come along." The young man in a blue flannel shirt, who did the paddling, smiled at Van Bibber's riding-breeches, which were so very loose at one end and so very tight

at the other, and at his gloves and crop. But Van Bibber pretended not to care. The three little girls placed the awful lunch basket on the front seat and sat on the middle one, and Van Bibber cowered in the back. They were hushed in silent ecstasy when it started, and gave little gasps of pleasure when it careened slightly in turning. It was shady under the awning, and the motion was pleasant enough, but Van Bibber was so afraid some one would see him that he failed to enjoy it.

But as soon as they passed into the narrow straits and were shut in by the bushes and were out of sight of the people, he relaxed and began to play the host. He pointed out the fishes among the rocks at the edges of the pool, and the sparrows and robins bathing and ruffling their feathers in the shallow water, and agreed with them about the possibility of bears, and even tigers, in the wild part of the island, although the glimpse of the gray helmet of a Park policeman made such a supposition doubtful.

And it really seemed as though they were enjoying it more than he ever enjoyed a trip up the Sound on a yacht or across the ocean on a record-breaking steamship. It seemed long enough before they got back to Van Bibber, but his guests were evidently but barely satisfied. Still, all the goodness in his nature would not allow him to go through that ordeal again.

He stepped out of the boat eagerly and helped out the girl with long hair as though she had been a princess and tipped the rude young man who had laughed at him, but who was perspiring now with the work he had done; and then as he turned to leave the dock he came face to face with A Girl He Knew and Her brother.

Her brother said, "How're you, Van Bibber? Been taking a trip around the world in eighty minutes?" And added in a low voice, "Introduce me to your young lady friends from Hester Street."

"Ah, how're you—quite a surprise!" gasped Van Bibber, while his late guests stared admiringly at the pretty young lady in the riding-habit, and utterly refused to move on. "Been taking ride on the lake," stammered Van Bibber; "most exhilarating. Young friends of mine—these young ladies never rode on lake, so I took 'em. Did you see me?"

"Oh, yes, we saw you," said Her brother, dryly, while she only smiled at him, but so kindly and with such perfect understanding that Van Bibber grew red with pleasure and bought three long strings of tickets for the swans at some absurd discount, and gave each little girl a string.

"There," said Her brother to the little ladies from Hester Street, "now you can take trips for a week without stopping. Don't try to smuggle in any laces, and don't forget to fee the smoking-room steward."

The Girl He Knew said they were walking over to the stables, and that he had better go get his other horse and join her, which was to be his reward for taking care of the young ladies. And the three little girls proceeded to use up the yards of tickets so industriously that they were sun-burned when they reached the tenement, and went to bed dreaming of a big white swan, and a beautiful young gentleman in patent-leather riding-boots and baggy breeches.

## THE GIFT OF THE MAGI \*

By O. HENRY

ONE dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

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The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly



she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knees and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still where a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie, Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.



"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the eighty-seven cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant school-boy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror, long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—Oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At seven o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't live through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry

Christmas,' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there is anything in the way of a hair-cut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my

girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshiped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hand under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. *In case two of the same were given, it was possible to exchange them.* And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. *unsatisfactorily* [But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest] [Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest.] Everywhere they are the wisest. They are the magi.

## THE CLEAREST VOICE \*

By MARGARET SHERWOOD

THE little business frown which John Wareham usually wore only at his office, and put off as he put on his hat in starting for home, lingered that evening, persisting through the long street-car ride, the walk past rows of suburban houses, and even to the brook at the foot of the hill below his home. Here it vanished, for the brook marked the spot where the world stopped and Alice began. He watched with a meditative happy smile the rough stone fence which bordered this bit of meadow land, with the trailing woodbine and clematis that made it a thing of beauty; and, as he climbed the hill, the deepening color in the sunset clouds and the notes of a wood thrush from the forest edge not far away became part of a deep sense of harmony, breaking a mood of anxiety and fear.

Then came the comforting glimpse of the red brick house through the encompassing green, with its white daintiness of porch, fan-window, and window-facings. It all looked like her; in its serene and simple distinction it seemed to embody her; her creative touch was everywhere. The bay window, about which they had disagreed when the house was planned, had, surprisingly, turned out to the liking of both. As he fumbled at the

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latch of the gate, and pinched his finger as he always did, a vexed sense of triumph came to him, for it surely would have worked better if he had insisted on having his own way! Everywhere were traces of little worries and little triumphs, the latter predominating. It was the very soul of home, from the threshold to the branches of the tall elm which touched the roof protectingly; it was wholly desirable,—and it might have to go.

As he followed the brick walk, in bitterness he closed his eyes that he might not see, and so ran into a porch pillar, the one on which Alice's red roses were blossoming; the queer little groan that he gave in some strange way took on the sound of "Railroads!" and again "Railroads!" as he beat his head against the pillar once or twice purposely; and his voice had a note of contempt. He had not felt that way about railroads when he had invested his savings, partly in the stock of a new railroad in the West, partly in the stock of an old railroad in the East that was doing wild things in the way of improvements. Then there had been nothing too good for him to say about the earning power of railroads, the wise management of railroads, the net profits of railroads. Now, both railroads were in trouble; dividends were cut, and the stock which he had hoped to sell at a profit had dropped almost to zero; the mortgage loan on his house was due in a month; and he, a man earning only a moderate salary in a real-estate office, had nothing in the world wherewith to meet the emergency. Even the savings-bank deposit had gone into railroad stock, in order that the mortgage might be paid off more quickly.

But his face lighted up with a smile both sad and bright which made quite a different face of it as he



crossed the threshold, that threshold on which Alice had stopped to kiss him the day he had married her and brought her home. There was something here that shut out all the trouble in the universe: about the doorway his wife's laughter seemed to be always floating—that laughter, merry, touched with tenderness, made up of mirth and sorrow, as all wise laughter is. Just then came little Jack to meet him, speeding madly down the baluster; and John, as he picked up his boy, kissed him, and reproved him for coming downstairs that way, had nothing to answer when his son averred that it was lots better than a railroad, save "That might well be."

"There's ice-cream for dinner," the boy exploded; and the father, roughly smoothing Jack's tousled hair, started as he caught a sound of chatter from the living-room, and stood still in dismay. That to-day of all days should be the time of the family gathering which brought two uncles, two aunts, and three cousins to the house! How completely he had forgotten! He hung up his hat and grasped little Jack's hand; he would tell them nothing about his troubles, nothing; he would be the ideal host, concealing his personal vexations under a cordial smile.

But hardly had he opened the door, with his office bag still held absent-mindedly in his hand, when they were upon him. The cordial smile did not deceive them for a minute. Aunt Janet, who was sitting by the fireplace, looked the most troubled of all, though she said nothing. It was "Why, John, what's the matter?" from Aunt Mary, and "Well, John, how goes it?" from Uncle Philip, who looked as if he knew that it went very badly indeed; and "What makes you look so worried? With a home like this, no man ought to look worried," from

his Cousin Austin, who had recently become engaged and was thinking about homes. He nodded approvingly at the room, which was simply furnished, soft in coloring, with English chintzes, a few pictures of trees and of water—all out-of-door things—and a fireplace that showed signs of constant use.

John's face brightened as he caught this look of admiration; not all the confusion of greeting and inquiries in regard to health, not all the business worries in the world could check the sense of peace that always came to him in entering this room, which, more perfectly than any other spot, expressed the personality of Alice. He managed to make his way through the little crowd of sympathetic wrinkled faces and wondering smooth faces. There were, it was discovered, comfortable chairs enough for all, and John found himself, as host, the center of a little group bent on probing his affairs, in friendly fashion, to the bottom.

It was his sister Emily who finally started the flood of questioning that led to the betrayal of the secret he had meant to keep for the present. She came bustling in through the door leading to the dining-room, looking anxious as soon as she glanced at her brother; and from the brass bowl of yellow roses held unsteadily in her hand, a few drops spattered to the floor.

"Are you ill, John," she asked, "or have you lost——"

Among all the many voices of inquiry, comment, question whereby she was interrupted, the voice of Alice was the clearest, making the others, no matter how near the speakers stood, seem to come from far away. Little Jack came and climbed upon his father's knee, a curious reproduction of the family look of worry appearing on his

chubby face. John the elder leaned his head back in the chintz-covered chair, shutting his eyes for a minute with a sense of warmth and satisfaction, and the nearness of the cuddling body of his son.

"Everything's the matter," he said wearily, "everything"; and he had a momentary twinge of conscience, realizing that he was not being the ideal host.

They all watched him anxiously, sympathetically, in silence; and Aunt Mary, near the window, went on drawing her needle in and out with exquisite precision, her gray head bent over a centerpiece which she intended to present to the house.

"Oh, no, I'm not ill," said John Wareham, suddenly sitting upright; "but the Long Gorge Railroad has gone into a receiver's hands, and three days ago the New York and Nineveh cut its dividend. I'm done for."

Emily gave a little gasp, and said nothing. "You will pull through all right," asserted Uncle Philip, stirring up the fire in order to hide his face. And Cousin Austin slapped John's shoulder, saying facetiously, "Take courage, Jeremiah. The worst is yet to come."

John laughed in spite of himself, and struck his fist upon the knee not occupied by Jack.

"Every dollar I had in the world I had drawn out and put into those two cursed things. Now I've nothing, no capital, no credit. The place has got to go."

"No, no!" cried the women-folk.

"The place has got to go," repeated John Wareham, his face in little Jack's hair. "And I feel as if I could rob a bank or a jewelry store to prevent that."

Jack burst into a delighted giggle, through which John heard, "You wouldn't do any such thing, and you

mustn't talk that way before Jack." It was Alice who spoke, with a little catch in her voice that sometimes came, half way between a laugh and a sob; and it was echoed by the two aunts.

"Railroads!" growled John, with supreme contempt. "It would have been a great deal better if railroads had never been invented. Jack, we shall have to get a prairie schooner, and trek to the West."

Jack's eyes shone like stars, but he got no chance to say anything, for, with that outburst, the springs of speech were loosened. There was the clamor, the chorus clamor, of relatives, indignant, inquisitive, sympathetic relatives, all eager to help, and all uneasily conscious that their own small measure of prosperity would hardly stand the strain. He shook his head sadly in answer to the inquiry as to whether he could not borrow: he had no security. Aunt Mary did not fail to remind him that she had warned him at the time; Aunt Janet, in a thin but affectionate voice, admitted that she had suffered in the same way heavily. - And then the clock ticked through a brief silence.

"Why don't you read your letters?" asked Emily suddenly. She stood, absent-mindedly arranging the flowers with one finger, busy already with plans for the future.

There was a small pile of letters on the centertable, quite within John's reach; he began tearing open the envelopes in mechanical fashion, throwing them untidily upon the floor. As each one fell, Jack slid down and picked it up, climbing back to his father's knee. One was a wedding announcement; one was a plumber's bill; at the third, John paused, read, looked up bewildered, and read again.

"Why, Emily!" he exploded, boyishly. "This can't be. Read that, will you, and tell me if I have lost my mind."

Emily put down the roses, and read the letter slowly, wonderingly, smiling even as her brother had smiled.

"Not Uncle John! And we were always so afraid of him!"

"Twenty thousand dollars!" murmured John.

Open-mouthed silence waited upon them, until Cousin Austin broke the spell with:

"I say, would you mind if I looked over your shoulder?"

And John flung him the letter with a little whoop of joy.

"Is this plain living, or is this a fairy story?" he demanded quizzically. "I never thought of myself as a dark-eyed hero with a fortune dropping into my hands just in the nick of time! A title ought to go with it."

The vibrant energy of the man was back again; the dry humor which, in sunny seasons, quivered about his mouth, was once more there; the mocking incredulity of his words belied the growing look of peace and security in his face. The years seemed slipping from him, bringing him a mellow boyhood.

"Twenty thousand dollars isn't exactly a fortune, John."

"It will buy the place twice over," exulted the man, "and we shan't have to start for the West in a prairie schooner right away!"

"Sha'n't we, papa?" asked little Jack, in hungry disappointment.

But the child's shrill voice had little chance where everybody was speaking at once. Aunt Mary's "Well, I

hope you hang on to this, and not be foolish again," and Cousin Austin's "You deserve it, John," and Uncle Howard's "Well, I *am* glad. Shake!" and several other congratulatory remarks all came at once.

"The poor old fellow; the poor old fellow," said John to himself softly, rubbing his hands. "I suppose he died out in Oklahoma all alone. How he happened to will this to me, I give up; he didn't like me very well."

The very atmosphere of the room had changed; once more a feeling of quiet pleasure pervaded it. The full sense of home, peace, security came back, with a suggestion of a kettle singing on the hearth, though there was no kettle nearer than the kitchen.

"But there's Frank——" It must have been Alice who suggested this, and a something disturbing, questioning, crept into the air.

"Frank!" said John Wareham suddenly. "Why, I'd forgotten all about Frank! We haven't heard of him for more than fifteen years or so, have we?"

"More than that," answered Emily. "He was in Mexico the last we knew."

"He may be living," suggested John. "Mexico is always in such a state—I suppose the mails can't be trusted."

"We ought to find out," said Alice.

"Uncle John had cast him off," suggested Emily tentatively, anxiously.

"But he was Uncle John's own son," said Alice, earnestly, compellingly; "and wasn't Uncle John in the wrong?"

"Uncle John was a queer customer," said John hastily. "He was cranky, no doubt about it, but he wasn't crazy;



and if this lawyer's statement is correct, I've got a good legal right to the twenty thousand, haven't I?"

"Of course you have!" said Aunt Mary.

"But the moral right?" whispered Alice.

"What was the quarrel about, anyway?" asked Austin.

"Frank's marriage, wasn't it? I never heard much about it."

"That was part of it," said Aunt Janet. "Frank, you know, fell in love with a little country girl whom his father did not want him to marry, but he insisted on having his way, and married her."

"Good for him," nodded Austin approvingly.

Little Jack, glancing from one to another with wide blue eyes, was silently weaving his philosophy of life, and his interpretation of humanity.

"Religion was mixed up in it in some way," contributed John. "Uncle grew to be something of a fanatic, and he wanted them both to believe what he believed, and they wouldn't, or didn't, or couldn't. It was incompatibility of temper all round, I dare say."

"Frank was a good son," reminded Alice. "He was patient with his father, and he all but gave up his life for Uncle John, nursing him through diphtheria."

More and more the sweet, persistent voice brought trouble and question into the atmosphere from which trouble and question had so suddenly cleared. The new security began to seem unstable; the new-found joy a stolen thing. Even in the pauses, the personality of the woman spoke from curtain and cushion and fireplace of this room of her devising. She dominated the whole, seeming the only presence there; brother and sister and guests shrank in the radiance of her.



"Do you really think I ought to hunt Frank up?" asked the man.

Emily shook her head, but doubtfully.

"You probably couldn't find him, after all these years."

"I could try," admitted John.

"Nonsense!" cried Aunt Mary, over her embroidery. "You stay right where you are, and pay off your mortgage. A man who has worked as hard as you have, and has had as much trouble, ought to take a bit of good luck when it comes."

"Think how much good you could do with it," murmured Aunt Janet.

"As the pickpocket said when he put the stolen dime in the collection plate," said Austin; but fortunately Aunt Janet did not understand.

"Uncle had a right to do what he pleased with his own," said John defiantly. "If he chose to cast off his son, for reasons which he considered sufficient, he had the right."

"But you cannot cast off your son," persisted Alice. "John, we have a boy of our own. You know that the obligation is one of all eternity; you cannot get rid of fatherhood."

"Oh, papa, papa, you hurt me," squealed little John, suddenly interrupted in his philosophy-weaving.

"Confound it all!" cried John with sudden irritation. "Isn't this just like life! To hold out the rope, just to grab it away again with a grin—I won't, I say. What is mine is mine."

"But it isn't yours."

"Did Frank have any children?" he asked.

"Several, I believe," admitted Emily reluctantly.

"And he never got on?"

"He never got on."

"And the twenty thousand might save their pesky little Mexican souls."

The child's laughter rippled out across the shocked silence of the elders.

"Maybe Uncle John left them something," suggested Emily. "For a man who tried such big things this doesn't seem much money."

Her brother shook his head.

"The entire sum of which he stands possessed," he read from the lawyer's letter.

"You might make a few inquiries through the post. I rather imagine the Mexican mail service isn't very trustworthy," suggested Aunt Mary, hopefully.

He looked at her, but in abstracted fashion, as if it were not to Aunt Mary that he was listening.

"I'll write to this Oklahoma lawyer, and then I must go to Mexico."

"Isn't it a little quixotic?"

"It's most likely all kinds of foolishness, like everything else I do," groaned the man. "But it's what I'd want done for my little chap if I were dead and he alive, and I had quarreled with him. I suppose I could keep this money and save my skin, but——"

"You couldn't keep it without finding out," murmured Alice, "because you are you, and the real you is incapable of doing a mean thing."

"You must do as you think best," said Emily at last. "Maybe, if you find Frank, he won't want it all, but will divide, knowing that his father willed it to you."

"That may be as it may be," said the man, leaning back in his chair with the face of one listening. "But I go to Mexico. It's a queer game we play here, and I'll be dashed if I can understand it, but I'm going to play it as fairly as I know how."

So the voice of Alice won, of Alice, who had been dead for five long years.

## THE OLD PEARL NECKLACE \*

By MARY VALENTINE STANLEY

"JOSEPH, the Princess A. has a pearl necklace to sell."

Joseph Wise was playing Schumann, and did not hear. He was an American Jew of fifty. He had a benevolent face, a bald head, and dreamy eyes. His young wife, Madeline, was also an American, but not of his faith. They had been married a year, and were spending a month of their prolonged honeymoon in Vienna.

"Joseph," repeated Madeline, "the Princess A. has a pearl necklace to sell. She has asked me to call this afternoon to see it."

"Where does she live?"

"In the L—— Palace, in the S—— Gasse."

"I should like to see that palace. I hear it is eight hundred years old."

"Good. You shall see the palace, Joseph, and incidentally I may pick up a jewel or two. Let us go now."

Joseph rose obediently and put on his coat. Madeline pulled a turquoise velvet hat over her brown curls and wrapped herself in a seal coat with a sable collar.

"I learned from Levi yesterday that this coat belonged to the Duchess L. As she was quite a dowd, it looks far better on me."

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Joseph looked into the fresh young face and smiled.

"You are beautiful, my dear. I like to see you in this coat, but I hope the Duchess is not cold."

"The aristocrats were a soft lot, Joseph. It will not hurt them to know poverty. I suffered hardships, and worked early and late until I met you, dear old boy!" She bent her soft cheek to his. "Now it is my turn to enjoy the flesh-pots of Egypt."

Arm in arm they walked through the gardens of the Belvedere. For a moment they paused in front of the palace where the ill-fated Sophie and Ferdinand had lived and gone out to die. Through the glass doors they caught a glimpse of the great marble hall and stairways with their statues and priceless tapestries.

Hundreds of children, undersized, with faces prematurely old, many scantily clad, were passing through the iron gates and climbing the hill to the palace.

"These youngsters are fed here every day by the Americans, Madeline. See the Stars and Stripes waving over the doors of the royal kitchen."

"It is the American money that is keeping Austria alive," she replied, "and to-day there are seven hundred and twenty kronen to the good old American dollar. I have already cashed five hundred dollars," added Madeline, gleefully. "Let's run along, Joseph. It's four o'clock; we dine at eight and we play bridge with the Levis at half-past nine."

They walked rapidly through the gardens, and came out on the Rennweg.

A young girl with a sack of coal on her back trudged wearily by. Women harnessed to carts patiently dragged their heavy loads. A one-legged soldier crouched on the

pavement. About his neck hung a card on which was written: "*Bitte, Ich bin ein blinder Mann.*"

"He fought for his country, poor lad, and now he has no country to mother him," said Joseph, sadly. "Look, Madeline."

"Yes, I see, Joseph, but you gave thousands of kronen for the soldiers' fund this morning. Let us forget them for a little while, and talk of something cheerful. Pearl necklaces, for instance. All my life I have longed for pearls. Many times I have gone window shopping on Fifth Avenue. One Saturday afternoon (I was working for fifteen dollars a week then) I went from shop to shop, trying on necklaces just for fun. You say yourself that my neck was made for pearls."

"Well, my child, buy your little baubles if you care for them."

They walked in silence for a time, Madeline in joyous anticipation of seeing the jewels on her white throat, and Joseph quietly content in her happiness.

When they crossed the courtyard of the Hofburg, Joseph's eyes kindled.

He recalled to Madeline the memory of the time when, as a boy of fifteen, he had come to Vienna with his father, who had presented a petition from the Jews to Francis Joseph.

"It was in this palace, Madeline, that we were most graciously received by his Majesty; and the petition did much good to my people."

His wife smiled and nodded. He did not know that his words had fallen on deaf ears.

When they reached their destination, Joseph lingered to look at the lions that guarded the door of the palace.

"You could tell some interesting tales, you old fellows," he said; "you saw——"

"I'm glad they can't talk," interrupted Madeline, good-naturedly.

The porter, a withered, pallid old man, opened the door with a faint "Kiss my hand." He led them through the great stone corridor, and up the steps to the apartment of the Princess. A butler, equally old and pallid, in a gorgeous livery with silver buttons, ushered them into the *salon*.

The Princess was short and fragile, but carried herself with dignity.

Her white hair was piled high on her small head. Her face, worn by sorrow, was still lovely in its delicate beauty.

Like all educated Viennese, she spoke English fluently.

She had never been to America, she said, but she had many American friends. She had frequently entertained Mark Twain and his sweet wife while they were living in Vienna. She had known Bret Harte, William Dean Howells, and many others.

Joseph was keenly interested in her reminiscences, but Madeline was restless. That the great of many lands—statesmen, authors, artists—had been entertained in that stately *salon* by the Princess was nothing to the young American. She had only a vision of herself wearing the pearls.

"Princess," she said, abruptly, "may I see the necklace?"

The Princess came back to the present with a start, but did not answer.



"It is quite cold here," she said, hastily. She touched the bell, and the butler entered with a tray of tea.

He put a shovel of coal in the big white-and-gold stove, and stole noiselessly out. The Princess followed him with her eyes.

"Dietrich was five years old when I was born," she said. "We were born in this palace, both of us, and all these years he has served me faithfully. My younger servants I have had to dismiss, but my old servants I hope to keep with me to the end."

Her voice faltered, but in an instant she smiled, saying gayly, as she poured the tea:

"You must drink my famous tea. This was given me by the Emperor of Japan, and I have enough for a lifetime."

"Delicious," said Madeline. "I wish that I knew the Emperor."

The old Vienna china with its rosebuds, the squat tea service and long spoons worn thin by age, the Princess with her high-bred face and sensitive hands, made a never-to-be-forgotten picture in the eyes of Joseph Wise.

Madeline cleared her throat for another effort. "Princess, it was very kind of you to give us a chance to see your pearls."

The Princess bowed her head and drew a jewel-case from her hand-bag.

Madeline's eyes glistened, she leaned forward eagerly.

The Princess held the case in her hands unopened.

"These pearls were given me by my great-great-grandmother, the Princess of A." She pointed to five miniatures that stood in a row on the old Viennese table.

"See, for five generations we have been painted in these pearls."

Joseph rose and studied the miniatures.

"I have made quite a collection of miniatures," he said, "but these are exceptional."

"Though the pearls are very old," continued the Princess, "they have not been allowed to die hidden in jewel-boxes. They have been kept alive and beautiful by almost constant wearing. Ever since they came into our possession twice each year they have been dipped in sea water."

She opened the box, and, taking out the precious treasures, wound them four times around her slender neck. They were exquisite in color and perfectly matched.

"When Napoleon Bonaparte was in Vienna, Madame, my grandmother, was presented to him. She wore these pearls. Napoleon wished them for Josephine. At the coronation of Queen Victoria my——"

But she was not allowed to finish her proud story. Madeline could no longer control her impatience.

"Princess, how much are you asking for the necklace?"

"Hermann, the expert, priced them at two million kronen."

"Thank you. May I look at them closely?"

Reluctantly the Princess placed them in her hand. Madeline walked to the pier-glass and wound them around her lovely neck. Her eyes sparkled. For some moments she stood silent, smiling at her reflection in the mirror.

Joseph had picked up an illuminated copy of the Book

of Job, and seemed to have forgotten everything but the exquisite beauty of the old pages.

The Princess sat quite still, her hands crossed in her lap.

Presently Madeline turned from the smiling face in the glass, and said, coldly:

"The price set for the pearls is absurd."

"Absurd!" cried the Princess. "The necklace is famous, not only for the perfection of the pearls, but because of its historic interest."

"Its history does not interest me, Princess. If they had been worn by all the queens in all the Courts of Europe, it would not enhance their value in my eyes."

The Princess shivered, her eyes filled with tears.

"You have other jewels?" asked Madeline.

"I had others, but nearly all of them were sacrificed during the second year of the war. I gave the money to my sister, the Duchess of L. My diamonds are in Paris, but the market is glutted. The windows are ablaze with jewels that once belonged to the aristocrats of Russia, who have literally poured their treasures into the lap of Paris."

"True," Madeline smiled slightly, "the markets everywhere are glutted. You can't expect to receive normal prices. I will give you one million five hundred thousand kronen for the pearls."

The Princess raised her eyes half proudly, half appealingly.

"I have gladly sold my jewels to help others; but the pearls are so precious, if I must part with them, do not ask me to do so at a sacrifice."

There was no response. The Princess glanced at Joseph. His face was bent low over the book.

The tall clock struck six.

"We must be going," said Madeline, briskly. "Shall I have my husband draw a check for one million five hundred thousand kronen? I assure you, Princess, you can do no better."

"One million five hundred thousand kronen is only about two thousand dollars in your American money," cried the Princess bitterly, "and my need is great."

For a moment they looked at each other, the *nouveau pauvre* and the *nouveau riche*. Madeline, still wearing the pearls, looked down on the little Princess from her superior height and waited.

A vision of what the morning would bring without money swept over the Princess—immediate need forced her to yield.

She bowed her head.

"You may have the pearls for one million five hundred thousand kronen," she whispered so low that Madeline was forced to bend her head to catch the words.

"Joseph, Joseph!"

"Yes, Madeline."

"Please draw a check for one million five hundred thousand kronen."

Slowly adjusting his glasses, Joseph drew his bank book from his pocket and wrote the check.

"Good-by, Princess." Madeline was all smiles and graciousness as she took the cold hand of the Princess in hers. "Let me know if you do not sell your diamonds in Paris. Ah, the jewel-case—I will take that too, please, but I will wear the necklace home."

She beamed on the butler, and put twenty kronen in his hand as she swept through the door into the hall.

Joseph bowed low as he slipped the check into the hand of the Princess.

"Don't discuss Job, please, Joseph. I know that is what you would like to do, but it is getting late," said the gay voice from the doorway.

"Coming, Madeline."

The Princess glanced at the check through her tears. Then she lifted her eyes to the man without a word, but he read in them her unspoken joy and gratitude. Joseph Wise, the Jew, had drawn his check for *two million kronen*.

When they reached the street, Madeline fairly bubbled over with joy.

"Joseph," she said, confidentially, "I shall tell all my friends that the necklace is valued at two million kronen, and——"

"Tell your friends," said Joseph, with a look the woman never forgot, "that your husband gladly paid the full value of the famous pearl necklace."

## THOSE SCARS \*

THE STORY OF A LOVING DEBT

By KATHARINE HOLLAND BROWN

"If you'd just let Madame make the ivory brocade with elbow sleeves, Mother, and veil the neck with Mechlin, instead of cutting it high," began Gwendolen, my son Charles Edward's wife, in the silky cooing voice that she always uses to wheedle the balky old lady.

"I stopped wearing elbow sleeves Centennial year, Gwen," said I. "I was past thirty and bare wrists were thought unseemly for elderly women. Cut the gown low, but remember I have a stiff neck these cold evenings. If you don't mind a red flannel band gleaming through the Mechlin, very well."

Gwen's pained silence did not cost me one guilty prick. I did not want elbow sleeves to the ivory brocade. I did not want the ivory brocade, either. I did not want a solitary one of the gorgeous, useless trappings that the children are forever heaping on my shoulders. Just because I'm little and thin and white-haired they must bedizen me till I feel like a Babylonish woman. "Granny is so picturesque!" "Granny stands pearls even better than Gwendolen." "Granny carries draperies so

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beautifully!" H'm. So does a dressmaker's dummy. I feel like one, many's the time.

"Then Madame may cut the brocade in a deep square?"

"Y-yes. Not too deep."

"And—your slippers? I'll order them to match the gown."

I groaned inwardly. "No, you needn't. I shall wear my old suède shoes, and take some comfort. Please don't look angelic and injured, Gwendolen."

"Really, Mother, you'll ruin the whole effect."

"Ruin fiddlesticks! Who will notice my shoes, pray? I'll be tucked away in the background all the evening."

Gwen looked a little apprehensive. Then she flushed pink.

"That's just the point, dear. Listen. You'll not stay in the background. You'll be right in the spotlight, as Peter would say. For—for Charles Edward says you absolutely must receive with us."

"What!"

"He has set his heart on it, Mother." Gwen took my stunned, spunky old face between her soft palms. Her voice dripped beguilement. "You know your dear boy wants you, Mother. Please!"

"Gwendolen, I will not. It's absurd! A little, bashful, trembly old body like me, to stand with you two and receive the Société Internationale and their sisters and cousins and aunts! I sha'n't."

"But you won't disappoint poor C. E." Gwendolen's voice quivered. "Really, Mother!"

"Oh, I may as well give up right now," I snapped. But it does nettle me to have Gwen twist me round her



finger with that fond, implacable plea, "You won't disappoint C. E." Oddly enough Gwen isn't stretching facts. Not a bit. For Charles Edward, my silent, hard-headed business man, is just as devoted, just as provokingly extravagant toward me as is Barbara, his spendthrift sister. All my children are extravagant toward me. But C. E. and Barbara keep me in a reproachful twitter from year's end to year's end. If I'd ever done one worth-while thing for my children, it would be different. But I did so pitifully little that nowadays my debt to them grows heavier than I can bear.

"Mayn't I send Felicie to do your hair? And the slippers——"

"Yes, send Felicie. The slippers—well, mind, if the heels are over an inch high I shall leave them upstairs and receive in my woolly carriage shoes. That's all."

"I'll see to the heels myself. You're such a love, Mother!" Gwen, having gotten exactly what she wanted, now gazed serenely around my room. "Is this the inlaid set Norton gave you? How exquisite! Oh, did your birthday bracelet come? The bracelet from Barbara?"

"Yes."

"May I see it?"

"Yes, if you wish." I unlocked my little wall safe. Some days Gwen's knack of rubbing me the wrong way amounts to genius.

I pulled out the thin gray enamel case with a vindictive jerk. My seventy-sixth birthday, just past, had brought such overpowering treasure that I felt like a vandal chief who's been looting a province. A tea gown of violet velvet and Chinese embroideries from C. E.,

the inlaid dresser set from Norton, pictures, laces, roses, silver—no wonder I sat dazed and weakly resentful before that pirate hoard! But all these splendors, heaped together, could not vie with this thin gray box from Barbara. The very feel of it made me sore at heart for her recklessness. It is bad enough for my boys to spend and spend on me of their abundance. But in Barbara it is dreadful! For Barbara married John Tuckerman, who is secretary of our embassy at Paris, and they live on the Boulevard de Montmorency and live very well indeed. But under that bland opulent surface lie Barbara's thousand careful economies, else there'd be no bland surface whatever. And when I think of my dear willful girl bestowing such a gift on me!

"Sapphires! What gorgeous stones! Do slip it on, Mother."

I slid it on. Thirty years ago how I longed to buy just one trinket, just a dollar bangle, even, for Barbe's white young arm! Now, by hateful irony, these living fires must glow on my lean wrist instead.

"Barbara always sends things for your hands, Mother. Such a quaint whim! Last birthday it was that diamond-and-opal ring. She begged you to wear it always. How many times have you put it on? Tell me that, Mother."

"A great many times: your Easter ball and the Lee dinner, and——"

"And that's all. At Christmas she gave you those wonderful wrist ruffles of antique point. Have you ever worn them?"

"They're too sumptuous, Gwen. Besides, they be-

longed to Lucrezia Borgia, or somebody equally grand. They ought to stay in a museum."

"Then the year before she brought you that Marie Antoinette muff of ostrich, with guipure frills."

"Yes; and, as Peter said, it made me look like an elderly chorus-lady. What it must have cost!" I choked.

"Yes, Barbara always sends things for your hands." She patted my fingers. "I don't wonder. They're lovely enough to wear all Lucrezia Borgia's rings, and all Marie Antoinette's piled on top."

"They're badly scarred," said I. I looked down at the broad white marks across each palm. So long ago—yet, as I looked, each dim cicatrix seemed to burn anew.

"Yes. But those little marred places make them even prettier. By the way, I've never heard you say how you got those scars."

"No, you never have," said I, very briefly indeed. I thrust the bracelet into the safe. "Pray tell Madame that if I must wear that ivory gown I hope she'll send the designer at once."

"Yes, Mother dear." Gwen trailed away. I looked after her.

Of course I'll go to C. E.'s reception and wear the ivory brocade. I'd wear ivory armor to please him. But how I dread it all!

Yes, it sounds very cowardly. But wait till you're seventy-six, going on seventy-seven. You'll learn how it feels to stand for hours in a tight, heavy gown, your shaky old head weighted with puffs and ornaments, your feet scuffling in cruel high-heeled shoes. Somebody al-

ways stands behind you, gayly fanning neuritis into your shoulders. Somebody else stands in front and makes you talk till you're croaking hoarse. And if you escape with a week of aches you'll do well.

"But one comfort!" I hugged the thought. "This reception shall spell Revolution. The very next morning I shall issue my ultimatum. Never again will I deck myself like a silly wax doll just to please the children. I shall send all my furbelows to the missionaries. I shall live in peace and slab-sided shoes the rest of my days. That's all."

"The designer, Mrs. Wentworth."

Eliza ushered in the slim, black-gowned young "artist." I stood meekly before the long mirror while she hung me with lengths of satin and lace. And deep in my meek little breast rebellion grew and grew.

"Now the gold embroidery," she murmured. "*C'est bien ravissant!*"

"*Et bien ridicule.*" I grimaced at the mirror. "Bring my wrapper, Eliza, and my book table. I'm a little tired."

Over Eliza's arm hung the violet velvet robe, C. E.'s latest gift. I met Eliza's smug eye.

"If you please, Eliza, I want to rest, not to pose against a Siena marble pillar. My wrapper, I said. The old red worsted one. And don't argue about it."

Sniffing resentment, Eliza brought the old red worsted one. It cost \$4.98 off the bargain counter, and it's as cozy as a grate fire.

"Mister Charles Edward may drop in, the day. How he'll hate to see you in this!" muttered Eliza, the privileged. "The homely old thing it is, entirely!"

"So'm I, Eliza. Put the violet one away."

I cuddled down, recalcitrant. Eliza, recalcitrant also, hung the robe in full view, where my eye should not escape its rebuking glory.

I tried to read. Instead, I lay thinking back and back. Thoughts better forgotten, maybe. Thoughts that can never be forgotten. The violet gown swayed on its hanger, like a languid violet lady. I glowered at it.

"Thirty years ago, if I'd had half the mcney you cost, you mint o' extravagance, I'd have bought C. E. a warm overcoat." And I saw C. E., my big lanky sophomore, as he'd stumble out, shivering and whistling, away in the icy dawn to build fires for "faculty folks," those careless rich who could squander a dollar a week on furnace work. To be sure, he'd tell me loftily that overcoats were a nuisance. Only sissies wore 'em. I'd not say a word. But I'd watch my boy swing off, blue-lipped, plucky, content, and the chill of it would creep around my heart.

"Or if I could have stolen the lace from you," I touched the frostwork coverlet, "wouldn't I have had the grandest christening robe for Norton!" And I thought, with a pang, what a lovely baby Norton was, and how crops failed that year, so I must cobble up his baptismal dress from the lone white petticoat left of my trousseau. Frederic and I tried to laugh about it, but how we did hate to carry our splendid little son up to the minister, dressed in my old yellowed flounces!

"And—— If I'd had the cost of the gold embroidery on the brocade I could have bought her Commencement

dress for Barbara." Ah, of all my pricking memories, that brought the poisoned sting!

No, it wasn't right to remember those things. But we'd planned so differently for our children, Frederic and I!

It was like the blotting out of the daylight when Frederic died. But I had to grope my way from that black gulf, for I had my little helpless children, Frederic's children. First, I tried to keep the farm; but I gave up at last and went to Lincoln and bought a house near the State University and took students to board. Soon the children would be growing up. Frederic's children should have their education, even if I could do no more. And that was all I ever did do for them. Hard as I tried, I could only keep up our home and help them work their way through college. No wonder it shames me to the core when they heap such gifts and benefits on me!

My children were all darlings, though so different. Charles Edward, my faithful toiler; Wayne, my handsome, arrogant second son; Norton, my little sober scientist, with his grubby pockets always crammed with "specimens"; and Barbara, my one lovely daughter. Barbara, so sweet, so gay, so imperious! No wonder everybody petted her and admired her, my beautiful, radiant girl! How I did long to give her beautiful things! But all those years we were so poor I could hardly scrape up enough to buy her school-books. And, last and bitterest, on her Commencement Day—— Oh, it's like a knife in my heart to think of that day, even now.



Wearing my faded gingham had n't blunted Barbe's wits, mind you. She took the Latin medal, and was made class salutatorian, if you please. Maybe we weren't all proud as Punch of our girl! Specially C. E. and Wayne. Boylike, they wouldn't give their sister one word of praise. But I saw well enough that they wanted to shout it.

"But I don't see how I can manage Barbe's Commencement dress," I told them one night. We three were alone, for Barbe had gone to a party.

"I reckon we'll manage it between us." C. E.'s hard young jaw set. He looked at Wayne. Wayne's dark eyes flashed.

"I guess our sister will look as fine as anybody. We'll hunt some new jobs to-morrow."

My heart pounded with eager hope. Then it sank again.

"You boys are working too hard now. What with your school, and your paper routes, and waiting on table, besides——"

"Nonsense, Mother! We're pretty tough. Old Pfeiffer offered me twelve cents an hour to wash buggies. And Professor Lord wants Wayne to hoe garden. What does a Commencement dress cost?"

I told him quick enough. Hadn't I lain staring awake, night after night, and figured every penny?

"Eleven dollars and sixty cents, son."

"Whe-ew! Just for one dress?"

"Yes, but that means slippers and long gloves, too. I can make her dress myself, but the goods will cost five dollars."

"Let it cost five dollars," said Charles Edward mag-



nificantly. "We've got two weeks, Wayne. Let's get busy."

They did get busy. They hoed garden at daybreak and washed buggies at sundown, toiling like Turks. For my share I baked cakes and washed curtains and even helped one professor's wife clean house, though I knew how angry the boys would be if they ever found me out. At last we three conspirators slipped downtown and bought the delicate mull, and the adorable white slippers, and the long gloves, no whiter than the slender young arms they were to grace. And we carried our booty home in a blare of triumph. But Barbara!—Well, the house wasn't big enough to hold her. The child was like a wild thing. I was scared at her frenzy of rapture. She was just a leaping flame of joy.

I sewed every stitch of that dress, and it was a blossom thing, if I do say it. Barbara exulted over every inch. Two days before Commencement all was ready; even to the satin bow for her hair and the little white paper fan that C. E. shamefacedly added. Barbe outraged him by hugging him for it, right before Wayne, too.

I took a big pasteboard box and laid those precious flummeries in it; every piece, even gloves and slippers. I set the box in my room where I could look in at it every little while. The sight of her finery was like champagne to Barbe. It sent her into bubbling ecstasies. But to me it was wine of victory. This once, in all our gray toiling years, we had achieved something, the children and I. This once we had won.

Commencement week dragged through sudden terrible heat. It was a hard week, too. It took all the courage I could muster to face those days. For it was

the week of my wedding, twenty years before. I didn't tell the children. Better to bear it alone. Yet that glowing sunshine, those fragrant June dusks, that pitiless moonlight——

Oh, you know, you know. Sometimes you think you have built a sea-wall against all your tides of grief. You've piled up years and tasks and duties. You believe that dark tempest can never rise again. Yet in the very hour of your security, when you're plodding along the dull shore, your days too full of work for tears, your nights too weary for dreams—— Then, with no whisper of warning, that wave will rise again. On it streams, shattering all your brave defenses, leaving you crushed, despairing, clinging to your frail rope of daily cares, the only rope that can hold you from being swept away on that unfathomable sea.

So it was with me those long days. I could hardly drag my body about. I was stupid, benumbed, so heart-sick I couldn't think, nor feel. All that kept me alive was the thought of Thursday, Barbe's Commencement Day. I hung to Thursday like a drowning thing. Somehow I knew that, once I'd look on Frederic's daughter, so proud and lovely among them all, I could creep back to life once more. Then I'd go back and build up my poor little wall of work and care—for the next wave to sweep away.

Commencement was set for nine o'clock Thursday morning. All Wednesday afternoon I was busy ironing. It was very hot. I'd stayed up most of the night before, cleaning. It was foolish, maybe, but I wanted the whole house sweet and fresh for my girl's great day.

I worked there alone all afternoon. At six the chil-

dren and the boarders trooped home and ate supper and trooped away again. Barbe went to a last rehearsal. The boys hurried off to their chores. Little Norton took his net and went moth-hunting. And I was alone again.

I went on ironing. I was very slow and dull. Outside my hot little kitchen the moon shone high; the wind blew sweet with June, as sweet as the wind of that summer night, just twenty years before. And minute by minute that dark wave was rising to my heart.

"If I had Barbe's things to look at, I could keep going." I remember how I snatched at the foolish thought. "I must have something to hold fast to. Or else drown."

I went to my room and brought the box, heaped with its airy joys. I put it on the table, right under the big, bright kerosene lamp in its bracket. As I ironed I looked in on that lacy silky loveliness, and the life began to stir in my veins. To-morrow! If I could hold fast till to-morrow!

There was a rush of feet. In banged Norton, clutching his net.

"Hooray, Mother! Look, quick! I've caught my Cercropia! Goody, goody! See!"

I stooped over the net. Norton loosened it cautiously. But not cautiously enough. With a misty whir, the great gleaming creature flashed out and circled to the ceiling.

"Golly! If he hits that lamp he's a goner!" Norton scrambled on the table and snatched high for those beating wings. They flickered beyond reach. He snatched again, lost his balance, lunged out wildly. . . .

"Oh, Norton!"

His outflung hand caught the lamp bracket, then down he fell. Down with him came lamp, bracket, and all. But the flaming mass did not graze the child. It crashed squarely into Barbe's things.

Just what happened then, I can't rightly tell. I caught up the blazing lamp and threw it out of the window. Then I sprang to that pile of burning cloth and beat and smothered it with my hands. I worked like a demon. I was perfectly calm. I wasn't even startled. Only something kept screaming in my brain: "Barbara's dress! Barbara's precious things! And to-morrow! To-morrow!"

I kept pounding the fire till it was just black ash. Norton stood by, stunned. Then I saw that my sleeves were afire and my apron too. Norton woke up then. He had sense enough to throw water on me and put out the last sparks. But neither of us said one word. We stood stock-still and gaped at that black, smoking heap.

Then I heard the gate click and a clamor of gay voices. Barbe and her brothers came racing through the house.

"Where's Mother?" "Why is the kitchen light out?" "Gracious, what a scorched smell!" "Some one bring the hall lamp, quick!" "Why, Mother, your dress is soaking wet. What on earth happened?"

Wayne and Charles Edward ran to me. But Barbara stood perfectly still. She stared at that black heap. Her cheeks grew very white. At last she spoke in a queer breathless voice:

"How did it happen, Mother?"

"It was an accident," said I stupidly. "Norton upset the lamp."

"How could he do that?"

"Ketchin' my moth," said Norton tartly.

"But why were my things out here in the kitchen?"

I tried to answer. But my head was swimming and my tongue felt thick and numb. I was numb all over, except my hands. They were awake enough. They felt as if I'd grasped two handfuls of raw pain.

At last I got it out. "I wanted the things here to look at," I mumbled foolishly.

There was a curious silence. Then out flashed Barbara's voice like a sword thrust:

"You wanted my things here—to look at!"

I don't know what more she said. I only know she stood there, so tall and beautiful, and hurled the words at me, blow on blow. They stormed down on me like hail. They bruised me so that I couldn't half understand. I couldn't speak back. I could only cower under it all. She never once raised her voice. Maybe it wouldn't have hurt so terribly if she had screamed or raged. But, oh, that level fury, that bleak young scorn! "You wanted them—to look at!"

"I had to have them, Barbe," I stammered. I was so beaten down by her anger I didn't know what to say. "We'll manage somehow. The stores are open yet. They'll let me have more goods on credit. I'll run up a dress overnight. If only I can sew with my hands."

I opened my right hand to look. I knew it was burned, but I didn't dream how badly. But with the agony of that seared, tearing flesh, I pitched down as if I'd been shot. I didn't faint. I just dropped in my tracks.

C. E. caught me up. I heard his furious low word to Barbara. "Now see what you've done, Miss!"

Then a great, sobbing, anguished cry.

"Mother, let me see, quick! Oh, your hands, your darling hands! You've burnt them, you've burnt them to the bone, trying to save my things for me. Oh, Mother; oh, Mother!"

For that was Barbara, every time. All passion one minute, all frantic tenderness the next.

They bandaged my hands among them, Barbara sobbing, Wayne ordering everybody about, and C. E. doing the real work, just as he always did. And Barbara vowed through her tears that the old things didn't matter, anyway. Who cared? She'd march on the stage in C. E.'s overalls, if need be. Then she dug into that smoking heap and fished out the black rags of slippers, and hung them on her little feet, and danced a jig that made me laugh through my torment, and nearly brought down the tin roof. For that was Barbara, too. And the next day C. E. and Wayne escorted me and my great ridiculous pillowy hands to the top row in the opera house gallery. There I sat, and watched my girl recite her salutatory; my proud beauty in her skimpy old lawn dress, with three streaks showing where the tucks were let down, and her feet in clumping old school shoes, laboriously blacked, and her slim hands bare—the only girl on that stage she was, without long gloves. And the slow hours dragged like lead. For all my joy in her beauty and her cleverness was drowned in the heartbreak of her disappointment. And I was to blame for it all, in my silly, childish loneliness. And



I was punished. For that bitter young anger had burnt deeper than the burning cloth on my hands.

"The designer again, Mrs. Wentworth."

Again I stood before the mirror. Again the mocking glass gave back the little shriveled old lady, all decked in tinsel and glitter. Once more my old tired soul revolted to its depths.

Yes; this is all I mean to my children. I'm just a peg to hang their extravagances on. Well, this ends it. The day after C. E.'s reception I shall issue my declaration of independence. This once more I'll bow to the yoke. Then, ho, for freedom!"

At last came the night of the reception. Grimly I put on all my fetters; the ivory brocade, the tight chilly slippers, the jewels, even the bracelet from Barbara. Grimly I beamed and chattered through that weary festival. My heart grew lighter every hour. I felt like an old horse who sees the pasture gates opening before him.

Little I knew about it. If I'd dreamed how ruthlessly my lazy, peaceful plans would all be swept away!

Late in the evening I sat down behind a screen of palms. There was no one near. I was waiting for Charles Edward and Gwendolen. Suddenly from behind the palms came Gwendolen's low clear voice.

"Well, dear, to-night has been a real success. And your mother was the star of the evening. I'm so glad I bullied her into receiving with us. Though the poor dear did kick against the pricks when I made her order that lovely gown."



"I suppose she does hate to tog up." C. E. drew a long satisfied sigh. "But if she knew how we children gloat over her in her war-paint—— Heavens, Gwen, when I think how it used to be with her."

Gwen gave a little low croon of understanding. I didn't understand, not one bit. Nor did I realize that I was eavesdropping, and on my own children, too!

"It's my very first baby impression, I suppose," C. E. went on, slowly. "I couldn't have been more than three, but I remember as plain as day how beautiful Mother was and how solemnly I believed she was the most beautiful thing in all the world. Father I remember chiefly as a big shoulder to ride pick-a-back on. But, Mother! Mother was the princess from the fairy-book, come true.

"I can see her now, when she'd dress up for meeting, in her flounced blue silk dress, and a bonnet all plumes tipped back on her curly head, and her face pink as a rose under it, and perfumery on her handkerchief for us little tads to sniff during church. I'd strut along beside her proud as a little peacock, and pity all the other kids whose mothers were just women-folks, not lovely, rosy ladies, like mine. And Father was always close by, so proud of her, the great overgrown boy he was, that he couldn't help strutting, too.

"Then, just as a picture is blotted from a screen, all that happy memory is blotted out. And year after year I can see Mother in her coarse black dresses, with her curls braided back from her white face and all the laughter gone from her eyes, and not one spark of fun left in her; nothing but work, work, work. All those lean years she toiled for us like a serf. Up long before dawn 'to cook our hot breakfast so we boys shouldn't

clean furnaces and shovel snow cold and hungry. Sitting late nights by the lamp, mending, piecing, contriving—skillful as a worker in cloisonné, she was—to keep us trig and neat. Sewing for other women, too, to earn decent store clothes and shoes for us. Bound that her children should not be shamed before their mates, d'you see, Gwen? Saving our self-respect for us, every time. And gritty? She never once let us see the face of defeat. D'you know what I mean by that, Gwen? Even after we were through college there were years of hard sledding. But Mother never once faltered. Take my first dress suit, for instance. Mother had worked all summer putting up fruit for professors' wives. She'd earned sixty dollars. We'd planned to spend twenty-five whole dollars for a vacation, a riotous week of camping up-river. Well, along came a card for me to the Engineering Society dinner at Chicago. Mother never turned a hair. Twenty dollars would buy my round-trip ticket. The other forty went bang for a dress suit. Yes, I could have worn my business clothes. But Mother knew I'd feel like a gone goose to find myself the only man without a swallow-tail, and she wasn't going to have my bluff called like that, see? Well—I met McLaughlin at that dinner. You bet that dress suit cast on the waters came back buttered! But Mother hadn't foreseen that. She'd just taken a sporting chance, that was all. That's Mother, all right. Sometimes I think, when Peter calls her a bully old sport, he comes nearer the truth than you and I with all our fond respectful blandishments. For Mother is a bully old sport to her finger tips. She's sand clear through. I never saw her lose her grip but once. That was the

time that Barbara—— But it isn't fair to Barbe to tell that story."

"But I want to hear it, dear."

"Oh, it's nothing much. One of the things that happen in lots of families, I daresay. Barbe was sixteen then and pretty as a peach. She was just graduating from high school. Mother and we kids had saved up and bought her her dress and all the doo-dabs, and we were feeling mighty toplofty. Well, the night before Commencement, didn't Mother and Norton manage to tip over a lighted lamp and burn up the whole bloomin' outfit. My, what a tragedy! It was like burning up a princess's trousseau. I daresay Mother has forgotten it all, years ago. But I can see her yet in her black calico, with her white scared face and her hands locked together—she'd burned 'em, badly; didn't you ever notice the scars?—And Barbara—whew!" He drew a long breath. "Poor old Barbe! You know that whirlwind temper of hers. She just sailed in on Mother. There wasn't any mercy in her. She fairly lashed Mother down in a heap. When I think how she stood there, steady as a rock, and told Mother she'd never forgive her—— By George!"

"Somehow, I don't believe your mother has ever forgotten that."

"Maybe not. But take it from me, Gwen, Barbe hasn't forgotten. That night is burnt into Barbe's memory deeper than the scars on Mother's hands. Last time I was in Paris Barbe took me to see the bracelet that she's just sent Mother. She was having it made at a whacking smart shop and I rather snubbed her for her extravagance. How that girl turned on me! 'C. E., you

great goop! Don't you remember the scars on Mother's hands? Can't I see them, always? I'd cover those little hands of hers solid with sapphires if I could hide those scars from my eyes.'"

Again Gwen gave that little soft understanding note.

"I thought she'd put it just right. When I think of the mother she's been to all of us! The passionate, wise giving of her! The little, eager, tender slave she was to every one of us good-for-nothing kids! Gwen, wouldn't I dress her in cloth-of-gold if I could."

The voices ceased. I heard the swish of Gwen's laces as they went away. I didn't follow. For one thing, I couldn't have pulled myself out of my chair. For another, I was thinking.

It's hard enough when you're young to know that you have made a deplorable fool of yourself. But when you're seventy-six, going on seventy-seven! Oh, the poor, resentful, blind old noodle I'd been! Poor old dunce, so complacent in her children's love that she could never look past its gifts and favors and see its tender necromancy, the magic that would transform the piteous little that I did for them into such a heaped golden debt! And yet, why can't they see? Why can't my children understand that it was merely my own happiness that I was heaping up—a treasure-hoard for my own self, and not a giving at all?

Charles Edward dropped in late this afternoon. I was cuddled up in my room with a magazine, warm and snug in my beloved red wrapper, and my delicious old slab-sided shoes.

"Mr. Charles Edward, ma'am." Thus Eliza, at the door.

"Tell him to come right up. N-no," for I'd glimpsed myself in the glass. "Tell him to wait in the library a few minutes."

I pulled off my soft old shoes. I reached into a drawer for chilly kid slippers with scandalous fluffy rosettes. Eliza, beaming approval, hooked me into the violet tea gown. The heavy velvet dragged miserably on my weak little bones. The hateful lace sleeves flapped on my wrists.

"You look fine and grand, ma'am," purred Eliza. I made a face at myself in the glass.

"Bring me that sapphire bracelet from the wall safe, Eliza. Then tell Mr. Charles Edward that I'm coming right down."

## RENFREW AND THE NEW GENERATION \*

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

MURIEL ELIOT had taken upon her young and comely shoulders the principal burdens of our ancient world. That is to say, the world still wobbled along, unconscious of the relief, and Muriel's mother warned her to be more careful of her health. "You'll lose your fine color," Mrs. Eliot said, "if you sit all the time in the house, reading and writing. You'll bleach out into one of those pale women with spectacles, and you don't want to be like that, do you? If you won't respect your constitution, you might at least have some regard for your looks. What *is* all this writing you're doing?"

"It isn't writing," Muriel informed her, glancing up from the pretty desk. "It's thinking. It's merely an embalmed thinking."

"Embalmed?" the mother repeated. "Embalmed?"

"Yes. Thinking embalmed in ink. Don't you like my saying that?"

"It seems a little unpleasant," Mrs. Eliot responded. "It's not an impropriety exactly, I suppose."

"'Impropriety!'" Muriel cried, and threw down her pen. "If you knew how *that* word offends *me*!"

"Impropriety should offend all nice people," said Mrs.

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Eliot. "Not the word, but impropriety itself. Why do you dislike the word?"

"Because it's a word of all the old tyrannies! Because it belongs to a dying fetichism! Because it's a—a tarnished symbol of discredited Victorianism!"

"Good gracious!" the mother exclaimed. "I don't understand a thing you're saying! Won't you please try to talk a little more plainly, dear?"

"Yes, I will!" Here, in her enthusiasm, Muriel jumped up and accompanied her oratory with a fluent eloquence of gesture. "Mother," she began, "you and your generation haven't been able to realize that the young people of to-day are thinking as they never thought before."

"Well, that's very nice," Mrs. Eliot said placidly. "But of course it isn't so very surprising. It's natural for them to think more at twenty and twenty-five than they did at ten and fifteen."

"I don't mean that. I mean the young people of to-day are thinking more than any young people ever thought before. When your generation was young, Mother, it didn't think."

"Didn't it?"

"No. It simply accepted what the old people taught it."

"Well, no," the mother said. "There's a difference I might point out. We accepted what the *good* old people taught us."

"Pooh! You just accepted the Victorian standards of conduct. The old people told you a thing was good, and you never examined it to see if it *was* good. They ruled you with words like 'impropriety'! If they told



you something was an 'impropriety,' you shivered and kept away from it. Well, we don't. You can't scare us off that way. We go and see for ourselves; we don't let the old people lead us in blinders."

Mrs. Eliot shook her head. "Are you sure?" she asked. "Are you sure some of the old people aren't leading you?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I was just wondering if maybe old people weren't leading you, after all; only instead of its being the good old people, maybe it's the bad old people. Some old people always do lead the young people, you know, Muriel."

"How absurd! Look at the French Revolution! Look at every revolt that's ever happened! The young people——"

"Yes, the young people took all the risks," Mrs. Eliot interrupted. "But old people had the ideas that got the young people into it. Of course, the young people thought these were their own ideas; I know that. You see, when a young person gets an idea, he usually doesn't stop to notice where it came from. The way he feels about it, why, when he finds some money in his pocket, he thinks it must belong to him, and when he finds an idea in his head, he thinks it's his own idea, of course. No; the old people are behind everything, if you look for them."

"Well, they're not behind the ideas of my generation," Muriel declared. "And you'll never get us to believe a thing is improper just because you Victorians call it an impropriety!"

"I wish," her mother said rather plaintively, "I do

wish you'd stop calling me a 'Victorian,' Muriel. I was born under Hayes and Wheeler, and I grew up under Garfield and Arthur, and Cleveland and Hendricks, and Harrison and——"

"Never mind!" Muriel interrupted. "You know perfectly well what I mean. My generation is in revolt against everything yours accepted. We shall change all that, but first we shall put everything to the acid test."

"What sort of test do you mean?" asked her mother.

"The acid test of experiment. What we like we may retain; what we don't like, we'll——"

"Oh, you'll keep what you like?" Mrs. Eliot said. "Nothing about right and wrong?"

"Our ideas of right and wrong are not Victorian, Mother."

"Oh, my," Mrs. Eliot sighed. "'Victorian!'"

Muriel returned to her desk. "If you really care to know what I'm writing," she said, "it's an essay on 'Marriage, a Victorian Delusion!'"

"You mean that's the title of your essay?" Mrs. Eliot queried.

"Yes," replied Muriel.

Mrs. Eliot laughed. "How funny!" she said.

"'Funny?' What on earth do you find '*funny*' about it?"

"Why, it sounds as though you believed Queen Victoria was never really married, but just thought she was!" And Mrs. Eliot again laughed in a manner that caused her daughter to look at her with the frowning perplexity all parents must behold when their children can only suspect themselves to be unaccountably descended from idiots.

"You really think it's *funny*, do you, Mamma?"

"Very!" said Mrs. Eliot. "Is the rest of it as funny as the title?"

Muriel's color appeared to be in no danger of bleaching, and it grew still higher with annoyance as she answered: "Precisely! The rest of it is precisely as 'funny' as the title."

"Do you go on and explain how poor Queen Victoria got her delusion?"

"Mamma!" the girl exclaimed angrily. "There isn't a word about Queen Victoria in my paper, and you know there isn't!"

"Well, then, what *is* in it?"

"If you care to know, I attack the whole institution of marriage. Marriage is purely a device of the wretched capitalistic system to secure the inheritance of private property to so-called legitimate offspring."

"Good gracious!"

"That's all it is," Muriel declared. "Yet your generation accepted it without question."

"Well," her mother returned mildly, "wasn't it rather a good thing for your generation that we did? Otherwise——" Here she paused, however, then inquired: "What do you propose to do about marriage, you new-generationers?"

"For my part," her daughter replied, "I believe that the whole institution ought to be done away with. I do not intend to marry, myself, Mamma."

"I'm very glad to hear it. Your father and I feel it's a great privilege to have you with us. Lately we'd been getting a notion, though——"

"What notion?" Muriel asked rather sharply, as her mother hesitated.

"Why, of course we've noticed that young Renfrew Mears doesn't seem to exhibit any great opposition to the institution of marriage, and your father and I have been thinking that just possibly Renfrew might be making some progress toward getting you to share his views."

"What nonsense!"

"Is it?" Mrs. Eliot laughed apologetically. "Well, of course we hope so, because we'd rather keep you ourselves. We only thought that if there *should* be any one——"

"There isn't!" Muriel interrupted with emphasis.

"No. But if there ever were—well, of course nobody can live across the street from you all his life and keep you from knowing pretty much all there is to know about him; so we're sure Renfrew is a good young man."

"No doubt," Muriel said wearily, "—according to the Victorian standards."

"Yes," Mrs. Eliot assented. "And his Victorian grandfather, old Ebenezer Mears, was very nice about Renfrew in his will. What is it you don't like about him, Muriel?"

"That young man is an outsider," the daughter replied coldly. "He and I have absolutely nothing in common."

"What! Why, you've lived all your lives in the same neighborhood; you have the same friends, the same——"

"I have not one single thought," Muriel interrupted, "not one, that I could share with him, not one that he could even understand."

"What about *his* thoughts? Can't he share his with you?"

"That's the trouble," said Muriel. "He knows none of mine, but I know all of his, and they bore me."

"Why?" Mrs. Eliot inquired, and added with some sharpness: "Because they're Victorian?"

"Because what few ideas he has are utterly commonplace and antiquated. We young people are going to build up a new world, Mamma: we don't think your generation did very well with the old one, and we decline to accept it. We've taken it from your hands and we're going to remodel it to suit ourselves. Renfrew Mears hasn't any part in the work, and, when I talk about it, he hasn't the faintest idea of what I mean."

"Neither have I," her mother said promptly. "Have you?"

At this Muriel looked both plaintive and resentful. "In the course of a discussion," she said, "I fail to see why any one should resort to insult! And if you think that's the way to make me like Renfrew Mears any better——" But here she suddenly gulped and turned away, because her sense of injury had naturally expanded within her almost unbearably as she heard herself defining her mother's question as an "insult." That is to say, having declared herself insulted, she began really to feel insulted; for thus in controversy do we frequently inflate our own emotions.

"Oh," she cried, "I simply can't stand him!" And she added: "I think he's the very stupidest person I ever knew in my whole life, and if you're going to talk any more to me about him, I merely ask to be excused!"

Her notable eyes threatened too moist a brilliancy, and Mrs. Eliot in haste made an unfortunate appeal.

"Please don't be so absurd, child. Don't get so upset over nothing."

"Absurd!" Muriel cried. "I'm 'absurd'? I believe if you *will* excuse me, Mamma, I'll take your advice and go out for a walk. It's not always *too* pleasant at home!"

She had already thrown open the door of the closet where she kept her hats, and her extended hand brought forth a simple but expensive structure of rough brown straw so readily that she must have selected it in her mind's eye during the emotional exchanges with her mother. She placed it upon her graceful head, swallowing reproachfully as she did so, and not even going near a mirror, which abstention she offered as a final proof of the depth of her injury. Then, not glancing back, she hurried silently from the room, leaving Mrs. Eliot to the meditations of a parent irretrievably convicted of persecution.

Pausing before the mirror in the hall downstairs only long enough just to touch her brown hat and brown hair, Muriel let the front door close behind her, not with a crash, but with a moderated sound sufficient to add something to the remorse upstairs, and went out into the afternoon shade and sunshine.

She had little more than passed through the gate when a young man of hopeful aspect came hurrying from the house across the street; he must have been watching for her, so nearly simultaneous was his sally.

That the sartorial harmonies might not be lacking, his dress betokened a hopefulness in keeping with his countenance. The shoes were unflecked white; so were



the trousers; a coat of lively gray sprouted cornflowers at the left lapel; and the sprightliness of scarf and hat-ribbon were hard to match. Yet the hopeful young man was not confident; for there was a breath of the plaintive upon his brightness, and his hope was of the kind that knows with what fatal readiness things go wrong. Although he smiled and his pleasing complexion was far from pallor, his eyebrows were slightly distrustful of destiny.

"Well, I declare!" he said, as he crossed to join the resentful lady. "I just happened to be coming outdoors, too. You wouldn't mind if I went along with you a little way, would you?" Then as he took note of her exceptional color and brooding gaze, he added nervously: "Or—or would you?"

"Oh, I don't know," she returned gloomily. "I suppose you can come along a little way if you have to."

Naturally this left him in some doubt, but he decided to take it at the best interpretation; so he said: "Well—well, thanks. I guess I will, then." And as she made no response, but walked in silence, he ventured to remark, as in explanation of his reasons for accepting so dubious a permission: "It's such a nice day."

"Is it?"

He looked at her in surprise. "Don't you think it's a nice day, Muriel?"

"My idea of 'a nice day,'" she said, "is a day when something pleasant happens."

"Oh, I see," he responded, somewhat faintly. "I expect you mean nothing pleasant has happened to you to-day, so far." Then, with a flickering of his hopefulness,



which already was near disappearance, he said: "Well, I hope nothing exactly unpleasant has happened to you, either."

"Do you?" She laughed with a discouraging brevity. "I've been having a discussion with my mother!"

"Oh, is that all?" he said, and at once showed the most complete relief. "I was afraid you meant my happening to come out just when you did and joining you. I'm glad it wasn't that."

She seemed not to hear him, but walked on, keeping her eyes steadily forward. "The discussion wasn't very pleasant," she informed him.

"I'm sorry."

"It was about you," she said abruptly.

"What!"

"Oh, yes."

Young Mr. Mears was astonished, but his hopefulness, before expiring, prevailed for a final moment.

"I'm afraid your mother doesn't like me very much," he said. "I'm sorry she——"

"Oh, no," Muriel interrupted quietly. "It was she who was on your side."

"She was?" Then, as he made an obvious deduction, the young man found himself unable to offer any comment more eloquent than "Oh, my!" However, he said it twice, and the dismalness of his voice expressed his feeling well enough.

"You don't seem to be very appreciative," Muriel observed coldly. "You don't appear to value my mother's opinion of you."

"Oh, yes, I do," he returned, with a feebleness of emphasis almost painfully contradictory of what he said.

"I do, indeed. I value your mother's good opinion very highly, indeed. But—but——"

"But what?"

"But——" Again he hesitated.

"But *what?*"

"Well——" he said. "But—well, see *here!*"

For an instant she relaxed so far as to let him see more than her profile, and gave him a disapproving look from both eyes. "You seem to want to say something, Renfrew. Aren't you able to express yourself at all?"

"Yes, I am," he returned. "What I mean is, I was wondering—well, if your mother was standing up for me, well, then——"

"Well, then, what?"

"Well, were there any other people around?" he inquired. "Or were just you and your mother having this discussion all by yourselves?"

"All by ourselves," Muriel replied distinctly. "Just she and I."

"Oh, my!" Renfrew said. "Oh, my!"

"Well, what?"

"Well, I'm afraid it looks as if—as if——"

"Yes, it does," said Muriel. "If you care for details, she seemed to feel that you were an eminently respectable character."

"And you didn't?" he cried. "You didn't even think I was respectable, Muriel?"

"Oh, yes, I did!"

"Well, then, if you agreed with her——"

"I didn't say I agreed with her, Renfrew. The respectable is just what I happen to deplore."

"You do? You'd rather I shouldn't be respectable?"

"Oh, dear!" she sighed. "I hate respectability—Victorian respectability! Victorian smugness!"

"I don't seem to follow you," Renfrew said pathetically. "Is it something or other you've been reading lately, Muriel?"

It was indeed; but this direct and naïve arrival at the fact was far from soothing her. "Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "You talk just like Mamma! Don't you suppose there *are* some people on earth who do their own thinking?"

"Oh, I know *you* do," he assured her hastily. "I know you always think for yourself, Muriel. I understand all about that, of course."

"You don't do anything of the kind!"

"I don't?"

"No!" she said. "That's one of the things I told my mother. You don't understand anything whatever about me."

"You mean that's what you told your mother, Muriel? Just for argument, you mean?"

"I told her," Muriel said deliberately, "I told her that you haven't even the faintest idea of one single thought of mine, while I know all about every thought you ever had, or could have, in your whole life!"

"You do?" he asked, and with a remarkable inspiration inquired further: "Was that what you were telling her you didn't like about me, Muriel? Did you say you couldn't put up with me much because I'm so respectable and you know everything I think, and I don't know anything you think?"

"I suppose so," she said. "Something like that."

"And do you think it's so?"

"Well, aren't you respectable?"

"I meant more particularly," he said, "are you really sure you know everything I think?"

"Goodness, yes!"

"Well, for instance, Muriel," he said in a rather feebly argumentative tone, "about what?"

"If you care for an instance: about marriage. You take the Victorian attitude; you believe in it as an institution; you believe in all the old institutions, Renfrew. You've simply accepted life as your parents and teachers taught it to you. You don't really belong to the new generation at all."

"I see what you mean," he said meekly.

"No, you don't. You merely say so to agree with me, but you don't really see, Renfrew."

"Why, don't I?"

"You couldn't!" she replied, with a cruelty natural enough under the circumstances; for she was deeply offended with her mother, and her mother had been Renfrew's champion. Somewhat as a favored pupil is tormented after school as a proxy for the inaccessible teacher, Renfrew was harried now; and Muriel had already constructed in her mind a fragment of drama that urged her on with the work. The parents of the heroine of this fragment meant to force upon her an undesirable person, incapable of any thought or act that could interest or surprise her, and to drag her down to that person's level by means of the discredited institution of marriage. Such also was the purpose of that person himself. Naturally, she was not the less inclined to see him suffer on that account, and she gave herself this consolation from time to time, as they walked along,

though most of her observation of him was with the edge of her eye, in profile.

His color had become as high as hers, his expression that of one who bears almost as much as he will; but when he spoke, he seemed to be (vocally, at least) still placative and humble. "I suppose I couldn't understand," he said. "Probably you're right, Muriel, and I don't belong to what you call the new generation, and wouldn't know how to understand 'em if I tried. It's kind of funny, though."

"What is?"

"Why, when I'm at a dance, or out at the Country Club, or anywhere where they *are*,—I mean the ones you and I grew up with,—why, they don't seem so terribly mysterious."

"I should think not! I don't mean *those*, Renfrew!"

"Don't you? Who do you mean?"

"I mean the ones that think."

"Well, which ones?" he insisted mildly. "For instance, take the other girls——"

"I certainly don't mean *any* of them!"

"Well, the other young men——"

"Nor any of *them*!"

"Well, then," he said reasonably, "who *do* you mean, Muriel?"

"I mean all those over the country who are doing the real thinking and leading."

"But you don't know any like that in this town? I mean, except you?"

"Never mind," she said.

"I only meant if you're the only one around here,

why, how many do you suppose there are in the other——”

“Never mind!” she repeated, more sharply.

“All right,” he returned. And yet if she had looked at him then (as she did not), she would have seen upon his face, for an instant, the expression of one who makes a desperate resolution. However, this external symptom passed at once, leaving the usual smooth surface; and he said, as submissively as before: “I guess I got off the subject. Anyhow, I was really thinking about what you said about marriage.” And without altering his tone he continued, as by a casual afterthought: “I think all such things ought to be put a stop to, myself.”

“All what things?”

“Why, Muriel!” he exclaimed, with the air of coming upon a bright thought. “What makes you ask me that? If you know everything I think, why would you ever have to ask me a question?”

This drew from her a sigh lamenting that she need be at the pains to explain so simple a matter. “I have to ask you questions because you express your thoughts so vaguely that often no one can be sure what you’re trying to say. Just then you mentioned marriage and went on to say that you thought ‘all such things ought to be put a stop to.’ But since you believe in marriage——”

He interrupted her. “What makes you say that, Muriel? What makes you think I believe in marriage?”

“What makes me?” she echoed, and laughed disdainfully. “When you proposed to me only last week!”

"I did?" he said, wonderingly. "It's funny I don't remember it."

"Yes, it would be!" she agreed.

"I mean, you must have misunderstood me."

"No doubt!"

"But, Muriel," he protested, "a proposal is usually understood to mean when a man asks a girl to marry him."

"Didn't you ask me to marry you?"

"I certainly didn't."

"What!"

"I didn't say a single word about any such thing," he said firmly, "—not about my marrying you or your marrying me, that is. I don't know how you ever got such an idea."

At this she turned her head to observe him with a sudden intensity. "You deliberately deny that you proposed to me?"

"Oh, no," he said. "I only meant I didn't propose anything like our getting married."

"Then what was it you did propose?"

"Well—I just thought——" He hesitated. "I only—I only thought——"

"Go on!" she said dangerously. "If you claim that you weren't proposing marriage to me, what were you proposing?"

"Why, I wouldn't propose getting married. Not to *anybody!*" he exclaimed. "Didn't I just tell you I think it ought to be put a stop to? For instance, I've got a theory——"

"I don't care to hear any of your theories," she informed him sternly. "What was it you proposed to me?"



"Why, I didn't really propose anything to you," he replied, with increasing embarrassment. "If—if you'll just remember our—our conversation, Muriel—why, you'll see I never said anything positive, right *out*, at all. I—I just thought maybe you'd be willing to kind of be engaged to me, or something."

"What!"

"That was all," he said. "I only meant we could be engaged or something. You don't have to get married just because you're engaged or anything like that, of course. Why, probably four or five times as many people get engaged as get married, and of course they're right about it, and there are good reasons for it. You take people that are engaged or anything like that, well, just look how much happier they look than married people! And besides, anybody can tell that engaged people think twice as much of each other as married people do. Why, anybody that's got any sense at all would like to be engaged, or something, but when it comes right down to *marrying*," he concluded, "why, that's a mighty different question. Myself, I believe it ought to be put a stop to!"

Miss Eliot halted abruptly and faced him. "Are you in earnest?" she inquired. "Do you deliberately state that you didn't mean you want to marry me?"

"But, Muriel, how could I have wanted to go as far as that when I believe, myself, it ought to be put a stop——"

"Are you crazy?"

"Why, no. I only——"

But she cut him short. "Then, if you please, I'll ask you to go home."

"Why, I just left there."

"Go anywhere!" she said fiercely. "Anywhere in the world except near *me!*"

Upon that, she turned sharply about, and with her head high and her expression destructive, went hurrying back to her own gate. Passing within its protection, she swept it to a violent closure behind her, and at the same moment, from between compressed lips, seemed to address it injuriously. "Idiot!" she said.

Indoors, she avoided contact with her mother, and having reached her own room, locked the door and repeated to that quiet and pleasant apartment the word that she had just hurled at the gate. "Idiot! Idiot!" she said. Then she tossed her brown hat on the bed, and apparently called either the hat, or the bed, or both, the same thing; after which she threw herself upon a blue lounge and spoke in a like manner to the ceiling.

"I Find You Everywhere," she had written, in a poem produced at seventeen, before her discovery of free verse struck from her the shackles of rhyme.

I find You everywhere,  
In ev'rything: in stars  
And in the sea, the sky, the air,  
The clouds, the earth—oh, even in the cars  
That on the shining rails go speeding there!

The unexpected "theory" of young Mr. Mears had at least won him a ubiquity rivaling that of her loved "You" of the poem; for Muriel found him everywhere and in everything that day. Even after sunset, as she paced up and down the yard in the dusk, alone, she was still naming things "Idiot!" for Renfrew.

Although her windows offered of his dwelling-place a view that usually included too many views of Renfrew himself, a fortnight now passed during which the insulting young man remained invisible to her. It might be supposed that Muriel did not so much as glance in the direction of the house opposite; but a consuming indignation is so like a consuming fondness that she looked at it perhaps even oftener than if she had been a victim of the latter. No one was permitted to be a witness of these glances, however, and when she went outdoors by daylight, there was not a hint of such a thing; but from the shadowy interior of her room her eyes searched with a hot fire the house and yard across the street, while her favorite definition was heartily breathed in that direction. Members of Renfrew's family were unconscious recipients of both the fiery glance and the definition, as they went in and out or lounged in the pleasant yard; but the theorist himself, Muriel decided, must either have left town or contracted the habit of using his alley gate and back door. Yet she doubted his possessing intelligence enough to be that much ashamed of himself.

Then, one day at lunch, she had sudden news of him from her father. "Has young Renfrew Mears been having any trouble with his face?" he inquired, addressing his daughter.

"'Trouble with his face?'" she repeated, frowning. "Not more than he inherited from his parents, I suppose."

Mr. Eliot, an absent-minded man, looked rather surprised. "Why, I declare! Haven't you noticed his face, Muriel?"

"Never with any pleasure," she returned. "Not at all, lately."

"Why, I declare!" her father said, his surprise increasing. "I thought he was usually over here about three or four times a day! And you haven't seen his face at all lately? Well, I declare!"

Muriel offered no vocal response, though the coldness of her silence conveyed the impression that she was a person of refinement, not pleased by the introduction of such a topic as this face her father appeared to find so interesting. Mrs. Eliot, on the contrary, showed a friendly anxiety. "I hope the poor boy hasn't been in an accident," she said. "Was it bandaged?"

"No, not at all," Mr. Eliot replied. "But I rather think it ought to be. A bandage would certainly look a great deal better."

"It isn't anything serious, is it?"

"Yes, I rather believe it is," he returned judicially. "I think it must be considered so. At least, from the point of view of appearance I think I'd call it pretty serious."

"But what *is* it? Has he broken out with something?"

"Well, that describes it fairly well," said Mr. Eliot. "He's raising a beard."

At this Mrs. Eliot uttered an exclamation of relief. "Oh, is that all!" she added.

"You wouldn't say so," her husband informed her, shaking his head, "not if you could see it. The greater part of it is very unsuccessful."

"Good gracious! What in the world is he doing such a thing *for*?"

"I didn't inquire," her husband said. "It's one of

those questions people who don't want their feelings hurt learn not to ask."

"Where did you see him?"

"Downtown," said Mr. Eliot. "He was walking about quite openly."

"Mercy! Is it as bad as that?"

"Worse than any one could tell you," he said. "You'd have to see it."

"But what in the world is he doing it for?"

"You've already asked me," her husband reminded her. "But it's a question that's kept haunting me, too, ever since I saw him. It struck me that no one could deliberately do such a thing except for some unavoidable medicinal reason, so to speak. That's why I asked Muriel if she knew of any trouble he'd been having with his face; and yet, when I looked at him, it didn't *seem* as if that could be the reason. There were plenty of transparent places where I could see that his complexion hadn't a blemish on it."

"How terrible!"

"No," said Mr. Eliot thoughtfully. "It doesn't inspire terror exactly. Wonder—a kind of sympathizing wonder—is what you feel. I should call it a wonderful effort."

Mrs. Eliot glanced at her daughter, then meditated for a moment, and said cheerfully: "I suppose they all have to go through a transition period, but come out very nicely afterward."

"You are now referring to young men," her husband inquired, "or to whiskers in general?"

"Yes," she said. "Don't they usually look all right by the time they're completed?"

"When they *can* be, no doubt they do, sometimes—to those that like them." Having thus responded, not without some rather ominous implications, Mr. Eliot accepted a cup of black coffee, applied the flame of a small silver dragon to the end of his cigar, and turned upon Muriel the solemn gaze of a father settling down in perfect bodily comfort to the bedevilment of his offspring. "I was going to suggest, Muriel," he said, "that you somehow get it hinted to him that your taste has changed."

"I'm afraid you don't always make your meaning quite clear," his daughter returned coldly, not condescending to humor his mood, which she easily perceived to be a frivolous one. "I believe we may as well change the subject."

"Why, no," he said. "If I'm so foggy that you don't understand the subject of my discourse, how do you know that you wish to change it? For the sake of greater lucidity, I'll explain that Renfrew's attempted beard gave me the idea you might have been speaking admiringly to him of King George, or of Marx, or possibly of Moses, or even Grand Admiral von Tirpitz—or could it have been Henri of Navarre, or François Premier, or perhaps Lord Salisbury, or Mr. Secretary Hughes? George Washington, Cromwell and Julius Cæsar were shaven men, but on the other hand Abraham, Homer, Charlemagne and Michelangelo are understood to have been whiskered. This early part of the twentieth century is provincial in time, which is really as stupid as being provincial geographically; the nineteen-twenties are too local, so to speak, to recognize that many of the very greatest figures have been bearded;



and it takes a heroic spark in so young a man as Renfrew Mears to imitate them in the teeth of our modern populace. Knowing him well, my reason immediately makes me conclude that any such spark must have been implanted from without.

"The rest of the deduction," pursued Mr. Eliot, "is childishly simple for any schoolboy, as people say who don't know schoolboys. You, my daughter, are the most probable implanter of sparks within that bosom, I seem to gather, and therefore I take it that about two or perhaps three weeks ago you spoke to him of the admirableness of some bearded *magnifico*, or perhaps it was only of the admirableness of beards. He has kept out of your sight, I go on to deduce, until he can bring you, not the flecked and feeble bud, but the full flower in blossom. On the other hand, a moment's startled observation of the growth has convinced me that his ever attaining so far is a matter of the gravest doubt. On that account I suggested you getting word to him that you don't care for rococo architecture as much as you thought you did—in a word, that your taste in hirsutics has changed. Then the poor young thing might take heart to shave, and come over here once more. Does this make the matter any clearer?"

"Yes, thank you," Muriel said with no increase of geniality. "Now may we change the subject?"

"Yes. Let us now turn to the discussion of Renfrew's emotion when he receives your liberating message. Will he feel just the joy of a simple heart, or will he know a shade of regret for——"

"Excuse me!" Muriel interrupted, rising abruptly. "I'm not likely to send Mr. Mears any message." And



with a stony dignity she walked out of the room, leaving her father to the reproaches of his wife for not knowing when to display a little tact.

Muriel's stony dignity was of the kind that has a fire smoldering within the stone; the surface is somewhat reddened with the heat of it. So, when she came out of her gate, a little before five o'clock that afternoon, a casual passer-by might have bephrased her as a "blushing young divinity"; but indeed her blush had no divinity, being on the contrary inspired by the Furies. For although the windows across the way gave no sign of life, yet it seemed hatefully possible that there was a rat behind the arras; the interstices of the lace curtains were ample for spy-holes.

Had there been such a spying eye as she suspected, she was worth the work, it may be said—her appearance being far beyond what mere self-respect demands of a girl who is going to a garden party. She had been deliberately at the pains to make herself beautiful, putting more time and mind upon her garnitures than would popularly be thought consistent in an Intellectual. Briefly, she was in the most exquisite and highest state of afternoon toilet possible, and why should any lady get herself into such a state except to be a treat to the eye? Of course the answer is that too much treating may be cruel; moreover there can be no doubt about the identity of the person whom she desired to punish; and yet, with the suspicion that he might be looking at her, she became the more furious!

Like almost all anger, this was anger thrown away, for she was spied upon by no one. The scene of the festival whither she was bound lay not far beyond the

next corner; and even at a little distance from the place she heard sounds betokening a liveliness unusual in so mild a gathering as she expected. A hedge intervened, but when she had passed round it and entered the garden, the first figure to meet her eye was that of young Mr. Mears.

To see him at once, singling him out from the two score or so of young people in the garden, was inevitable; for he stood among them much as a star of the theater stands among his company, centralized to point of highest conspicuousness by the general action and grouping. The emphasis thus placed upon him was the more remarkable for being a feature of Renfrew's *première*, so to speak, as a focus of social attention. Characteristically, he had always been a background figure, "correct" and a little timid, one of those indistinguishable hoverers at a tea, ready to murmur laughter as an instantaneous token of geniality when so little as the weather was mentioned. But to-day proved his timidity to be of the type that upon occasion, more than merely reversing itself, turns completely inside out, exposing strange things from an unsuspected interior.

Profuse as had been Mr. Eliot's verbosity at lunch, it had not quite prepared Muriel for what she now saw actually before her. The hair upon Renfrew's head was of a lustrous brown, charmingly polished with golden lights, and no one could have anticipated the fitful auburn that had made its appearance upon his well-shaped cheeks and chin. An admirer might have called it the red badge of courage, for although the people to whom it was now being exhibited were all of a neighborly and everyday familiarity with Renfrew, as with

one another, they were young and correspondingly unsympathetic. A high degree of hardihood must unquestionably be allowed him.

"Howdado!" the young hostess said, when Muriel greeted her. "You've noticed him, haven't you? I mean Renfrew Mears. What on earth's come over him?"

"I don't know."

"Well, if you don't, nobody does! Of course everybody thinks you told him you admired somebody with a beard, Muriel. Didn't you?"

"I did not."

"Well, it's really nothing for you to get up-stage over," the girl returned. "Of course everybody's sure you're responsible somehow. Honestly, *what* did you——"

"I have nothing whatever to do with him or his affairs."

"No? Well, the only other explanation is that you've driven him about crazy: he certainly talks like it. Just listen to him!"

To listen to Renfrew just then was unavoidable, in fact. He stood close by, addressing himself rather heatedly to a group of attentive and delighted auditors. "I never in my life said anything of the kind!" he declared. "I always did feel about such things the way I do now. I think they ought to be put a stop to!"

The response was one of those choruses of laughter not infrequently heard upon school-grounds when a taunting circle gathers round some unfortunate child. "You can laugh!" Renfrew retorted hotly. "But you better look out!" With that, he turned away, went to join another group, and apparently explained a grievance.

He was received with hypocritical sympathy, which shifted to the frankest mockery only a moment later. "I know what I'm talking about!" he could be heard protesting. "I know from my own thinking about it, and it ought to be put a stop to!"

The haughty Muriel walked to the other end of the garden, as far from the merry-makers surrounding Renfrew as the limits of the place permitted; but she found it impossible to remove herself from the orbit of his new celebrity. The most devoted of her girl friends, Eleanor Middleton, following to join her, could speak of nothing else.

"What *have* you been doing to the poor thing, Muriel?" Eleanor inquired.

"What 'poor thing'?"

"Muriel!" the friend exclaimed. "Don't be such a hypocrite! What's the use with *me*? Besides, everybody else knows it as well as I do; the poor thing *couldn't* break out this way unless it was something about you. Look at that gang around him now; they're giggling at him, but they're all looking at *you*!" And she added, in a frank way: "For that matter, so's everybody else!"

"Let them look!"

"But aren't you going to tell just me, Muriel?" the friend begged.

"Tell you what?"

"What you've been doing to him."

"Eleanor Middleton," said Muriel, "will you be kind enough never in your life to speak to me again of that Clown!"

"Oh!" said Miss Middleton.

"I mean it!"

"Yes, but don't you want to hear——"

"No, I don't!"

"I mean," Miss Middleton insisted, "I mean he's *saying* things as peculiar as his face looks. I won't ask you to tell me anything; I just wanted to know if you wouldn't like to hear what he's been talking about."

"I asked you never in your life to——"

"Oh, yes," Miss Middleton returned. "Only he says he's got a theory—at least he calls it a theory—I thought you might want to know what——"

"I do know his 'theory,' thanks!"

"All right," her friend acquiesced good-naturedly. "I only meant that since everybody thinks you're responsible, of course, for whatever he thinks and does——"

"That's *enough*, I said!"

"Oh, well," the other girl murmured, and relapsed into a silence somewhat moody, while the corresponding silence of Muriel Eliot might be understated as a seething one. It was true that the group about Renfrew looked curiously at her; and as Miss Middleton had pointed out, others, too, glanced at her from time to time with interested and covertly mirthful eyes, so that Muriel began to find her position intolerable.

The giggling evoked by Renfrew's oratory grew louder; he seemed to approach the passionate, and even at the other end of the garden could be heard declaiming: "I tell you it ought to be put a *stop* to!"

"*Oh!*" Muriel exclaimed in a low voice. "I won't stay here!"

But as she moved to depart, Miss Middleton followed hastily. "Muriel! Don't do that!"

"No, I'll go, Eleanor! I won't stay another instant in such a silly place!"

"If you go home when you've really just got here, they *will* have something to talk about!"

"Why?"

"They'll think you're upset about Renfrew."

"I? About that Clown!"

"They couldn't help believing it if you trot off home like this."

Muriel paused in her movement toward the street, her state of mind partaking visibly of a desperate indecision. "I won't stand it," she said. "I won't!"

"If I were you, dear," the sympathetic Miss Middleton suggested, "I'd act just as if I didn't notice anything. I'd behave as if nothing at all were happening."

"Go tell that Clown to come here to me!" said Muriel.

"What? Right before everybody?"

"What difference does that make now? Go tell him!"

The friendly Eleanor hesitated, evidently of half a mind to remonstrate against the supreme conspicuousness of such a course. But even a devoted friend may not always resist the temptation to become an important actor in a dramatic climax,—there are not many tests of friendship more severe than this,—and Miss Middleton's hesitation was brief, for within her a universal human yearning had been roused. She said, "All right!" and went.

A few moments later an instinctive prophecy of hers was amply fulfilled: she became for the time one of the three most interesting persons at the party, and the very focus of low-voiced inquiry, as Renfrew somewhat nerv-



ously crossed the garden to the agitated lady who had summoned him.

"How—how are you, Muriel?" he said. "I—I haven't seen you for several days. Are you all well in your family?"

She looked at him, but not reassuringly, and forbore to reply; whereupon he fanned himself with his hat, remarking placatively: "It's kind of warm this afternoon. Well, we're all well over at *our* house."

At this, her voice became just audible in embittered laughter, and he looked apprehensive. "Eleanor Middleton said you wanted to tell me something or other, Muriel."

"Yes," she said. "I'm surprised to hear that your family are in good health, though!"

"You are?" he inquired. "Why shouldn't they be?"

"They have to live in the same house with you," she explained.

"Oh, my!" he said, dismayed. "Are you angry with me about something?"

"How dare you!" she said. "Yes, how dare you come here or anywhere else *looking* like that?"

"I don't see what you mean," he said with a brazenness that took her breath. "Do you mean I look different from usual, some way or other?"

"Oh!" she cried, and the exclamation seemed to enlighten him.

"Oh, you mean about my face?" he said. "Well, I don't need to tell you my idea about that."

"Your 'idea'!" she said scornfully. "What idea could anybody have for doing such a thing?"

"Why, you know, of course," he answered confidently. "*You* know, Muriel."

"I don't! How could I know anything as idiotic as that? And how dare you go about telling people you have a 'theory' that marriage 'ought to be put a stop to'?"

"Well, if I did anything like that, of course I wouldn't have to explain it to *you*, Muriel."

"You wouldn't? I think you'd better!" she cried. "It's a pretty position for a girl to be in, isn't it? Everybody's thought for *years* that you've been wanting to marry me—and you go about telling them you only believe in *engagements*—good heavens!—as you had the horrible candor to explain to *me*! And to make things pleasanter for me, you make yourself *look* like this! I suppose so that everybody'll believe you're trying to discourage me from even getting *engaged* to you!"

"But I haven't been——"

"Did you tell them," she interrupted, "did you tell them that you had explained your 'theory' to *me*?"

"Muriel! I never said a word about any such theory to anybody except you."

"What!" she cried. "Why, you've been doing it all afternoon! I've heard you, myself, all over the place bleating: 'It ought to be put a stop to!' How dare you deny it?"

"But that wasn't about marriage, Muriel. What I've been explaining to 'em this afternoon, why, that's been about a totally different theory of mine. This one isn't against marriage, Muriel."

"No?" she said incredulously. "What is it 'against'?"

"I was reading an article not long ago," he explained. "It said everybody had all been getting too artificial or something for the last three or four hundred years, and we ought to be more kind of natural about everything. So I got an idea. For instance, people that just used water to wash in were probably a lot more natural and had fewer diseases, and they kept cleaner, too. I began to think we oughtn't to use so much soap. That's all I was talking about, Muriel. I wasn't telling 'em marriage ought to be put a stop to, but too much soap."

"What!" she cried. "You expect me to believe such a story as that?"

"Well, it's so," he returned. "That's why I thought it would be sort of consistent if I didn't use it much, so it seemed I'd better let my face be the way it would naturally. You believe me, don't you, Muriel?"

"Why, it's horrible!" she said.

"You mean me?" he inquired meekly. "Or do you only mean the way I look?"

"I mean everything about you!" she said fiercely. "Why, you—you aren't respectable!"

He had been standing before her much as a school-boy, embarrassed under reproof, stands before a severe teacher; but upon this outburst of denunciation he brightened amazingly—certainly to the amazement of her who played the angered teacher. "Well, *now* you like me, don't you?" he said.

"*'Like you!'*" she cried. "Don't you know that when you behave like this everybody in town thinks *I'm* responsible?"

"Well, you are," he responded with perfect simplicity.

She uttered a faint outcry. "I'm responsible for your

insulting me as you did the other day? I'm responsible for your 'theory' about—*soap*? I'm responsible for the state of your—your face?"

"Why, of course," he answered in a gentle voice. "You know all my ideas about everything, so that nothing I do could be a surprise to you. Well, then, if I had an idea of doing anything that would bother you, why, you'd tell me beforehand, so I wouldn't do it. So *you* know why I——"

"Quit saying '*You* know' to me!" she cried. "I don't know anything about you, and I don't want to! You seem to forget how you insulted me the other day!"

"Why, Muriel!" he exclaimed. "I just wanted to be one of the new generation. You're always so against everything, I wanted to be against things, too. And if people say you're responsible for whatever I do, why, you *know* they're right! I've been this way ever since you came home from college."

She stared at him, then said abruptly:

"Go home!"

"Wh-what?" he stammered.

"I said 'Go home!'" she repeated angrily. "Go home and don't dare to come over to see me this evening after dinner until you've made yourself respectable!"

It was then that the garden-party audience stopped whispering and became open-mouthed, stricken with a complete and sudden mystification. Renfrew was tall, and above the hedge there was a fine view of his triumphant smile, merged in auburn fluff, as he went gayly down the street.

## THE FAT OF THE LAND \*

By ANZIA YEZIERSKA

IN an air-shaft so narrow that you could touch the next wall with your bare hands, Hanneh Breineh leaned out and knocked on her neighbor's window.

"Can you loan me your wash-boiler for the clothes?" she called.

Mrs. Pelz threw up the sash.

"The boiler? What's the matter with yours again? Didn't you tell me you had it fixed already last week?"

"A black year on him, the robber, the way he fixed it! If you have no luck in this world, then it's better not to live. There I spent out fifteen cents to stop up one hole, and it runs out another. How I ate out my gall bargaining with him he should let it down to fifteen cents! He wanted yet a quarter, the swindler. Got-tuniu! My bitter heart on him for every penny he took from me for nothing!"

"You got to watch all those swindlers, or they'll steal the whites out of your eyes," admonished Mrs. Pelz. "You should have tried out your boiler before you paid him. Wait a minute till I empty out my dirty clothes in a pillow-case; then I'll hand it to you."

Mrs. Pelz returned with the boiler and tried to hand

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it across to Hanneh Breineh, but the soap-box refrigerator on the window-sill was in the way.

"You got to come in for the boiler yourself," said Mrs. Pelz.

"Wait only till I tie my Sammy on to the high-chair he shouldn't fall on me again. He's so wild that ropes won't hold him."

Hanneh Breineh tied the child in the chair, stuck a pacifier in his mouth, and went in to her neighbor. As she took the boiler Mrs. Pelz said:

"Do you know Mrs. Melker ordered fifty pounds of chicken for her daughter's wedding? And such grand chickens! Shining like gold! My heart melted in me just looking at the flowing fatness of those chickens."

Hanneh Breineh smacked her thin, dry lips, a hungry gleam in her sunken eyes.

"Fifty pounds!" she gasped. "It ain't possible. How do you know?"

"I heard her with my own ears. I saw them with my own eyes. And she said she will chop up the chicken livers with onions and eggs for an appetizer, and then she will buy twenty-five pounds of fish, and cook it sweet and sour with raisins, and she said she will bake all her shtrudels on pure chicken fat."

"Some people work themselves up in the world," sighed Hanneh Breineh. "For them is America flowing with milk and honey. In Savel Mrs. Melker used to get shriveled up from hunger. She and her children used to live on potato-peelings and crusts of dry bread picked out from the barrels; and in America she lives to eat chicken, and apple shtrudels soaking in fat."

"The world is a wheel always turning," philosophized



Mrs. Pelz. "Those who were high go down low, and those who've been low go up higher. Who will believe me here in America that in Poland I was a cook in a banker's house? I handled ducks and geese every day. I used to bake coffee-cake with cream so thick you could cut it with a knife."

"And do you think I was a nobody in Poland?" broke in Hanneh Breineh, tears welling in her eyes as the memories of her past rushed over her. "But what's the use of talking? In America money is everything. Who cares who my father or grandfather was in Poland? Without money I'm a living dead one. My head dries out worrying how to get for the children the eating a penny cheaper."

Mrs. Pelz wagged her head, a gnawing envy contracting her features.

"Mrs. Melker had it good from the day she came," she said, begrudgingly. "Right away she sent all her children to the factory, and she began to cook meat for dinner every day. She and her children have eggs and buttered rolls for breakfast each morning like millionaires."

A sudden fall and a baby's scream, and the boiler dropped from Hanneh Breineh's hands as she rushed into her kitchen, Mrs. Pelz after her. They found the high-chair turned on top of the baby.

"Gewalt! Save me! Run for a doctor!" cried Hanneh Breineh, as she dragged the child from under the high-chair. "He's killed! He's killed! My only child! My precious lamb!" she shrieked as she ran back and forth with the screaming infant.

Mrs. Pelz snatched little Sammy from the mother's hands.

"Meshugneh! What are you running around like a crazy, frightening the child? Let me see. Let me tend to him. He ain't killed yet." She hastened to the sink to wash the child's face, and discovered a swelling lump on his forehead. "Have you a quarter in your house?" she asked.

"Yes, I got one," replied Hanneh Breineh, climbing on a chair. "I got to keep it on a high shelf where the children can't get it."

Mrs. Pelz seized the quarter Hanneh Breineh handed down to her.

"Now pull your left eyelid three times while I'm pressing the quarter, and you'll see the swelling go down."

Hanneh Breineh took the child again in her arms, shaking and cooing over it and caressing it.

"Ah-ah-ah, Sammy! Ah-ah-ah-ah, little lamb! Ah-ah-ah, little bird! Ah-ah-ah-ah, precious heart! Oh, you saved my life; I thought he was killed," gasped Hanneh Breineh, turning to Mrs. Pelz. "Oi-i!" she sighed, "a mother's heart! Always in fear over her children. The minute anything happens to them all life goes out of me. I lose my head and I don't know where I am any more."

"No wonder the child fell," admonished Mrs. Pelz. "You should have a red ribbon or red beads on his neck to keep away the evil eye. Wait. I got something in my machine-drawer."

Mrs. Pelz returned, bringing the boiler and a red

string, which she tied about the child's neck while the mother proceeded to fill the boiler.

A little later Hanneh Breineh again came into Mrs. Pelz's kitchen, holding Sammy in one arm and in the other an apronful of potatoes. Putting the child down on the floor, she seated herself on the unmade kitchen-bed and began to peel the potatoes in her apron.

"Woe to me!" sobbed Hanneh Breineh. "To my bitter luck there ain't no end. With all my other troubles, the stove got broke. I lighted the fire to boil the clothes, and it's to get choked with smoke. I paid rent only a week ago, and the agent don't want to fix it. A thunder should strike him! He only comes for the rent, and if anything has to be fixed, then he don't want to hear nothing.

"Why comes it to me so hard?" went on Hanneh Breineh, the tears streaming down her cheeks. "I can't stand it no more. I came in to you for a minute to run away from my troubles. It's only when I sit myself down to peel potatoes or nurse the baby that I take time to draw a breath, and beg only for death."

Mrs. Pelz, accustomed to Hanneh Breineh's bitter outbursts, continued her scrubbing.

"Ut!" exclaimed Hanneh Breineh, irritated at her neighbor's silence. "What are you tearing up the world with your cleaning? What's the use to clean up when everything only gets dirty again?"

"I got to shine up my house for the holidays."

"You've got it so good nothing lays on your mind but to clean your house. Look on this little blood-sucker," said Hanneh Breineh, pointing to the wizened

child, made prematurely solemn from starvation and neglect. "Could anybody keep that brat clean? I wash him one minute, and he is dirty the minute after." Little Sammy grew frightened and began to cry. "Shut up!" ordered the mother, picking up the child to nurse it again. "Can't you see me take a rest for a minute?"

The hungry child began to cry at the top of its weakened lungs.

"Na, na, you glutton." Hanneh Breineh took out a dirty pacifier from her pocket and stuffed it into the baby's mouth. The grave, pasty-faced infant shrank into a panic of fear, and chewed the nipple nervously, clinging to it with both his thin little hands.

"For what did I need yet the sixth one?" groaned Hanneh Breineh, turning to Mrs. Pelz. "Wasn't it enough five mouths to feed? If I didn't have this child on my neck, I could turn myself around and earn a few cents." She wrung her hands in a passion of despair. "Gottuniu! The earth should only take it before it grows up!"

"Shah! Shah!" reproved Mrs. Pelz. "Pity yourself on the child. Let it grow up already so long as it is here. See how frightened it looks on you." Mrs. Pelz took the child in her arms and petted it. "The poor little lamb! What did it done you should hate it so?"

Hanneh Breineh pushed Mrs. Pelz away from her.

"To whom can I open the wounds of my heart?" she moaned. "Nobody has pity on me. You don't believe me, nobody believes me until I'll fall down like a horse in the middle of the street. Oi weh! Mine life is so black for my eyes! Some mothers got luck. A child

gets run over by a car, some fall from a window, some burn themselves up with a match, some get choked with diphtheria; but no death takes mine away."

"God from the world, stop cursing!" admonished Mrs. Pelz. "What do you want from the poor children? Is it their fault that their father makes small wages? Why do you let it all out on them?" Mrs. Pelz sat down beside Hanneh Breineh. "Wait only till your children get old enough to go to the shop and earn money," she consoled. "Push only through those few years while they are yet small; your sun will begin to shine; you will live on the fat of the land, when they begin to bring you in the wages each week."

Hanneh Breineh refused to be comforted.

"Till they are old enough to go to the shop and earn money they'll eat the head off my bones," she wailed. "If you only knew the fights I got by each meal. Maybe I gave Abe a bigger piece of bread than Fanny. Maybe Fanny got a little more soup in her plate than Jake. Eating is dearer than diamonds. Potatoes went up a cent on a pound, and milk is only for millionaires. And once a week, when I buy a little meat for the Sabbath, the butcher weighs it for me like gold, with all the bones in it. When I come to lay the meat out on a plate and divide it up, there ain't nothing to it but bones. Before, he used to throw me in a piece of fat extra or a piece of lung, but now you got to pay for everything, even for a bone to the soup."

"Never mind; you'll yet come out from all your troubles. Just as soon as your children get old enough to get their working papers the more children you got, the more money you'll have."

"Why should I fool myself with the false shine of hope? Don't I know it's already my black luck not to have it good in this world? Do you think American children will right away give everything they earn to their mother?"

"I know what is with you the matter," said Mrs. Pelz. "You didn't eat yet to-day. When it is empty in the stomach, the whole world looks black. Come, only let me give you something good to taste in the mouth; that will freshen you up." Mrs. Pelz went to the cupboard and brought out the saucepan of gefülte fish that she had cooked for dinner and placed it on the table in front of Hanneh Breineh. "Give a taste my fish," she said, taking one slice on a spoon, and handing it to Hanneh Breineh with a piece of bread. "I wouldn't give it to you on a plate because I just cleaned up my house, and I don't want to dirty up more dishes."

"What, am I a stranger you should have to serve me on a plate yet!" cried Hanneh Breineh, snatching the fish in her trembling fingers.

"Oi weh! How it melts through all the bones!" she exclaimed, brightening as she ate. "May it be for good luck to us all!" she exulted, waving aloft the last precious bite.

Mrs. Pelz was so flattered that she even ladled up a spoonful of gravy.

"There is a bit of onion and carrot in it," she said, as she handed it to her neighbor.

Hanneh Breineh sipped the gravy drop by drop, like a connoisseur sipping wine.

"Ah-h-h! A taste of that gravy lifts me up to



heaven!" As she disposed leisurely of the slice of onion and carrot she relaxed and expanded and even grew jovial. "Let us wish all our troubles on the Russian Czar! Let him burst with our worries for rent! Let him get shriveled with our hunger for bread! Let his eyes dry out of his head looking for work!

"Shah! I'm forgetting from everything," she exclaimed, jumping up. "It must be eleven or soon twelve, and my children will be right away out of school and fall on me like a pack of wild wolves. I better quick run to the market and see what cheaper I can get for a quarter."

Because of the lateness of her coming, the stale bread at the nearest bakeshop was sold out, and Hanneh Breineh had to trudge from shop to shop in search of the usual bargain, and spent nearly an hour to save two cents.

In the meantime the children returned from school, and, finding the door locked, climbed through the fire-escape, and entered the house through the window. Seeing nothing on the table, they rushed to the stove. Abe pulled a steaming potato out of the boiling pot, and so scalded his fingers that the potato fell to the floor; whereupon the three others pounced on it.

"It was my potato," cried Abe, blowing his burned fingers, while with the other hand and his foot he cuffed and kicked the three who were struggling on the floor. A wild fight ensued, and the potato was smashed under Abe's foot amid shouts and screams. Hanneh Breineh, on the stairs, heard the noise of her famished brood, and topped their cries with curses and invectives.

"They are here already, the savages! They are here

already to shorten my life! They heard you all over the hall, in all the houses around!”

The children, disregarding her words, pounced on her market-basket, shouting ravenously: “Mamma, I’m hungry! What more do you got to eat?”

They tore the bread and herring out of Hanneh Breineh’s basket and devoured it in starved savagery, clamoring for more.

“Murderers!” screamed Hanneh Breineh, goaded beyond endurance. “What are you tearing from me my flesh? From where should I steal to give you more? Here I had already a pot of potatoes and a whole loaf of bread and two herrings, and you swallowed it down in the wink of an eye. I have to have Rockefeller’s millions to fill your stomachs.”

All at once Hanneh Breineh became aware that Benny was missing. “Oi weh!” she burst out, wringing her hands in a new wave of woe, “where is Benny? Didn’t he come home yet from school?”

She ran out into the hall, opened the grime-coated window, and looked up and down the street; but Benny was nowhere in sight.

“Abe, Jake, Fanny, quick, find Benny!” entreated Hanneh Breineh, as she rushed back into the kitchen. But the children, anxious to snatch a few minutes’ play before the school-call, dodged past her and hurried out.

With the baby on her arm, Hanneh Breineh hastened to the kindergarten.

“Why are you keeping Benny here so long?” she shouted at the teacher as she flung open the door. “If you had my bitter heart, you would send him home long ago and not wait till I got to come for him.”

The teacher turned calmly and consulted her record-cards.

"Benny Safron? He wasn't present this morning."

"Not here?" shrieked Hanneh Breineh. "I pushed him out myself he should go. The children didn't want to take him, and I had no time. Woe is me! Where is my child?" She began pulling her hair and beating her breast as she ran into the street.

Mrs. Pelz was busy at a pushcart, picking over some spotted apples, when she heard the clamor of an approaching crowd. A block off she recognized Hanneh Breineh, her hair disheveled, her clothes awry, running toward her with her yelling baby in her arms, the crowd following.

"Friend mine," cried Hanneh Breineh, falling on Mrs. Pelz's neck, "I lost my Benny, the best child of all my children." Tears streamed down her red, swollen eyes as she sobbed. "Benny! mine heart, mine life! Oi-i-i!"

Mrs. Pelz took the frightened baby out of the mother's arms.

"Still yourself a little! See how you're frightening your child."

"Woe to me! Where is my Benny? Maybe he's killed already by a car. Maybe he fainted away from hunger. He didn't eat nothing all day long. Gottuniu! Pity yourself on me!"

She lifted her hands full of tragic entreaty.

"People, my child! Get me my child! I'll go crazy out of my head! Get me my child, or I'll take poison before your eyes!"

"Still yourself a little!" pleaded Mrs. Pelz.

"Talk not to me!" cried Hanneh Breineh, wringing

her hands. "You're having all your children. I lost mine. Every good luck comes to other people. But I didn't live yet to see a good day in my life. Mine only joy, mine Benny, is lost away from me."

The crowd followed Hanneh Breineh as she wailed through the streets, leaning on Mrs. Pelz. By the time she returned to her house the children were back from school; but seeing that Benny was not there, she chased them out in the street, crying:

"Out of here, you robbers, gluttons! Go find Benny!" Hanneh Breineh crumpled into a chair in utter prostration. "Oi weh! he's lost! Mine life; my little bird; mine only joy! How many nights I spent nursing him when he had the measles! And all that I suffered for weeks and months when he had the whooping-cough! How the eyes went out of my head till I learned him how to walk, till I learned him how to talk! And such a smart child! If I lost all the others, it wouldn't tear me so by the heart."

She worked herself up into such a hysteria, crying, and tearing her hair, and hitting her head with her knuckles, that at last she fell into a faint. It took some time before Mrs. Pelz, with the aid of neighbors, revived her.

"Benny, mine angel!" she moaned as she opened her eyes.

Just then a policeman came in with the lost Benny.

"Na, na, here you got him already!" said Mrs. Pelz. "Why did you carry on so for nothing? Why did you tear up the world like a crazy?"

The child's face was streaked with tears as he cowered, frightened and forlorn. Hanneh Breineh sprang

toward him, slapping his cheeks, boxing his ears, before the neighbors could rescue him from her.

"Woe on your head!" cried the mother. "Where did you lost yourself? Ain't I got enough worries on my head than to go around looking for you? I didn't have yet a minute's peace from that child since he was born!"

"See a crazy mother!" remonstrated Mrs. Pelz, rescuing Benny from another beating. "Such a mouth! With one breath she blesses him when he is lost, and with the other breath she curses him when he is found."

Hanneh Breineh took from the window-sill a piece of herring covered with swarming flies, and putting it on a slice of dry bread, she filled a cup of tea that had been stewing all day, and dragged Benny over to the table to eat.

But the child, choking with tears, was unable to touch the food.

"Go eat!" commanded Hanneh Breineh. "Eat and choke yourself eating!"

"Maybe she won't remember me no more. Maybe the servant won't let me in," thought Mrs. Pelz, as she walked by the brownstone house on Eighty-fourth Street where she had been told Hanneh Breineh now lived. At last she summoned up enough courage to climb the steps. She was all out of breath as she rang the bell with trembling fingers. "Oi weh! even the outside smells riches and plenty! Such curtains! And shades on all windows like by millionaires! Twenty years ago she used to eat from the pot to the hand, and now she lives in such a palace."

A whiff of steam-heated warmth swept over Mrs. Pelz as the door opened, and she saw her old friend of the tenements dressed in silk and diamonds like a being from another world.

"Mrs. Pelz, is it you!" cried Hanneh Breineh, overjoyed at the sight of her former neighbor. "Come right in. Since when are you back in New York?"

"We came last week," mumbled Mrs. Pelz, as she was led into a richly carpeted reception-room.

"Make yourself comfortable. Take off your shawl," urged Hanneh Breineh.

But Mrs. Pelz only drew her shawl more tightly around her, a keen sense of her poverty gripping her as she gazed, abashed by the luxurious wealth that shone from every corner.

"This shawl covers up my rags," she said, trying to hide her shabby sweater.

"I'll tell you what; come right into the kitchen," suggested Hanneh Breineh. "The servant is away for this afternoon, and we can feel more comfortable there. I can breathe like a free person in my kitchen when the girl has her day out."

Mrs. Pelz glanced about her in an excited daze. Never in her life had she seen anything so wonderful as a white-tiled kitchen, with its glistening porcelain sink and the aluminum pots and pans that shone like silver.

"Where are you staying now?" asked Hanneh Breineh, as she pinned an apron over her silk dress.

"I moved back to Delancey Street, where we used to live," replied Mrs. Pelz, as she seated herself cautiously in a white enamel chair.



"Oi weh! What grand times we had in that old house when we were neighbors!" sighed Hanneh Breineh, looking at her old friend with misty eyes.

"You still think on Delancey Street? Haven't you more high-class neighbors uptown here?"

"A good neighbor is not to be found every day," deplored Hanneh Breineh. "Uptown here, where each lives in his own house, nobody cares if the person next door is dying or going crazy from loneliness. It ain't anything like we used to have it in Delancey Street, when we could walk into one another's rooms without knocking, and borrow a pinch of salt or a pot to cook in."

Hanneh Breineh went over to the pantry shelf.

"We are going to have a bite right here on the kitchen table like on Delancey Street. So long there's no servant to watch us we can eat what we please."

"Oi! How it waters my mouth with appetite, the smell of the herring and onion!" chuckled Mrs. Pelz, sniffing the welcome odors with greedy pleasure.

Hanneh Breineh pulled a dish towel from the rack and threw one end of it to Mrs. Pelz.

"So long there's no servant around, we can use it together for a napkin. It's dirty, anyhow. How it freshens up my heart to see you!" she rejoiced, as she poured out her tea into a saucer. "If you would only know how I used to beg my daughter to write for me a letter to you; but these American children, what is to them a mother's feelings?"

"What are you talking!" cried Mrs. Pelz. "The whole world rings with you and your children. Everybody is envying you. Tell me how began your luck?"

"You heard how my husband died with consumption," replied Hanneh Breineh. "The five hundred dollars lodge money gave me the first lift in life, and I opened a little grocery store. Then my son Abe married himself to a girl with a thousand dollars. That started him in business, and now he has the biggest shirt-waist factory on West Twenty-ninth Street."

"Yes, I heard your son had a factory." Mrs. Pelz hesitated and stammered; "I'll tell you the truth. What I came to ask you—I thought maybe you would beg your son Abe if he would give my husband a job."

"Why not?" said Hanneh Breineh. "He keeps more than five hundred hands. I'll ask him if he should take in Mr. Pelz."

"Long years on you, Hanneh Breineh! You'll save my life if you could only help my husband get work."

"Of course my son will help him. All my children like to do good. My daughter Fanny is a milliner on Fifth Avenue, and she takes in the poorest girls in her shop and even pays them sometimes while they learn the trade." Hanneh Breineh's face lit up, and her chest filled with pride as she enumerated the successes of her children. "And my son Benny he wrote a play on Broadway and he gave away more than a hundred free tickets for the first night."

"Benny? The one who used to get lost from home all the time? You always did love that child more than all the rest. And what is Sammy your baby doing?"

"He ain't a baby no longer. He goes to college and quarterback's the football team. They can't get along without him."

"And my son Jake, I nearly forgot him. He began

collecting rent in Delancey Street, and now he is boss of renting the swellest apartment-houses on Riverside Drive."

"What did I tell you? In America children are like money in the bank," purred Mrs. Pelz, as she pinched and patted Hanneh Breineh's silk sleeve. "Oi weh! How it shines from you! You ought to kiss the air and dance for joy and happiness. It is such a bitter frost outside; a pail of coal is so dear, and you got it so warm with steam heat. I had to pawn my feather bed to have enough for the rent, and you are rolling in money."

"Yes, I got it good in some ways, but money ain't everything," sighed Hanneh Breineh.

"You ain't yet satisfied?"

"But here I got no friends," complained Hanneh Breineh.

"Friends?" queried Mrs. Pelz. "What greater friend is there on earth than the dollar?"

"Oi! Mrs. Pelz; if you could only look into my heart! I'm so choked up! You know they say a cow has a long tongue, but can't talk." Hanneh Breineh shook her head wistfully, and her eyes filmed with inward brooding. "My children give me everything from the best. When I was sick, they got me a nurse by day and one by night. They bought me the best wine. If I asked for dove's milk, they would buy it for me; but—but—I can't talk myself out in their language. They want to make me over for an American lady, and I'm different." Tears cut their way under her eyelids with a pricking pain as she went on: "When I was poor, I was free, and could holler and do what I like in my

own house. Here I got to lie still like a mouse under a broom. Between living up to my Fifth-Avenue daughter and keeping up with the servants, I am like a sinner in the next world that is thrown from one hell to another." The doorbell rang, and Hanneh Breineh jumped up with a start.

"Oi weh! It must be the servant back already!" she exclaimed, as she tore off her apron. "Oi weh! Let's quickly put the dishes together in a dish-pan. If she sees I eat on the kitchen table, she will look on me like the dirt under her feet."

Mrs. Pelz seized her shawl in haste.

"I better run home quick in my rags before your servant sees me."

"I'll speak to Abe about the job," said Hanneh Breineh, as she pushed a bill into the hand of Mrs. Pelz, who edged out as the servant entered.

"I'm having fried potato lotkes special for you, Benny," said Hanneh Breineh, as the children gathered about the table for the family dinner given in honor of Benny's success with his new play. "Do you remember how you used to lick the fingers from them?"

"Oh, mother!" reproved Fanny. "Any one hearing you would think we were still in the pushcart district."

"Stop your nagging, sis, and let ma alone," commanded Benny, patting his mother's arm affectionately. "I'm home only once a month. Let her feed me what she pleases. My stomach is bomb-proof."

"Do I hear that the President is coming to your play?" said Abe, as he stuffed a napkin over his diamond-studded shirt-front.

"Why shouldn't he come?" returned Benny. "The critics say it's the greatest antidote for the race hatred created by the war. If you want to know, he is coming to-night; and what's more, our box is next to the President's."

"Nu, mammeh," sallied Jake, "did you ever dream in Delancey Street that we should rub sleeves with the President?"

"I always said that Benny had more head than the rest of you," replied the mother.

As the laughter died away, Jake went on:

"Honor you are getting plenty; but how much mezum-men does this play bring you? Can I invest any of it in real estate for you?"

"I'm getting ten per cent royalties of the gross receipts," replied the youthful playwright.

"How much is that?" queried Hanneh Breineh.

"Enough to buy up all your fish-markets in Delancey Street," laughed Abe in good-natured raillery at his mother.

Her son's jest cut like a knife-thrust in her heart. She felt her heart ache with the pain that she was shut out from their successes. Each added triumph only widened the gulf. And when she tried to bridge this gulf by asking questions, they only thrust her back upon herself.

"Your fame has even helped me get my hat trade solid with the Four Hundred," put in Fanny. "You bet I let Mrs. Van Suyden know that our box is next to the President's. She said she would drop in to meet you. Of course she let on to me that she hadn't seen

the play yet, though my designer said she saw her there on the opening night."

"Oh, gosh, the toadies!" sneered Benny. "Nothing so sickens you with success as the way people who once shoved you off the sidewalk come crawling to you on their stomachs begging you to dine with them."

"Say, that leading man of yours, he's some class!" cried Fanny. "That's the man I'm looking for. Will you invite him to supper after the theater?"

The playwright turned to his mother.

"Say, ma," he said, laughingly, "how would you like a real actor for a son-in-law?"

"She should worry," mocked Sam. "She'll be discussing with him the future of the Greek drama. Too bad it doesn't happen to be Warfield, or mother could give him tips on the 'Auctioneer.'"

Jake turned to his mother with a covert grin.

"I guess you'd have no objection if Fanny got next to Benny's leading man. He makes at least fifteen hundred a week. That wouldn't be such a bad addition to the family, would it?"

Again the bantering tone stabbed Hanneh Breineh. Everything in her began to tremble and break loose.

"Why do you ask me?" she cried, throwing her napkin into her plate. "Do I count for a person in this house? If I'll say something, will you even listen to me? What is to me the grandest man that my daughter could pick out? Another enemy in my house! Another person to shame himself from me!" She swept in her children in one glance of despairing anguish as she rose from the table. "What worth is an old mother to American



children? The President is coming to-night to the theater, and none of you asked me to go." Unable to check the rising tears, she fled toward the kitchen and banged the door.

They all looked at one another guiltily.

"Say, sis," Benny called out sharply, "what sort of frame-up is this? Haven't you told mother that she was to go with us to-night?"

"Yes—I——" Fanny bit her lips as she fumbled evasively for words. "I asked her if she wouldn't mind my taking her some other time."

"Now you have made a mess of it!" fumed Benny. "Mother'll be too hurt to go now."

"Well, I don't care," snapped Fanny. "I can't appear with mother in a box at the theater. Can I introduce her to Mrs. Van Suyden? And suppose your leading man should ask to meet me?"

"Take your time, sis. He hasn't asked yet," scoffed Benny.

"The more reason I shouldn't spoil my chances. You know mother. She'll spill the beans that we come from Delancey Street the minute we introduce her anywhere. Must I always have the black shadow of my past trailing after me?"

"But have you no feelings for mother?" admonished Abe.

"I've tried harder than all of you to do my duty. I've *lived* with her." She turned angrily upon them. "I've borne the shame of mother while you bought her off with a present and a treat here and there. God knows how hard I tried to civilize her so as not to have

to blush with shame when I take her anywhere. I dressed her in the most stylish Paris models, but Delancey Street sticks out from every inch of her. Whenever she opens her mouth, I'm done for. You fellows had your chance to rise in the world because a man is free to go up as high as he can reach up to; but I, with all my style and pep, can't get a man my equal because a girl is always judged by her mother."

They were silenced by her vehemence, and unconsciously turned to Benny.

"I guess we all tried to do our best for mother," said Benny, thoughtfully. "But wherever there is growth, there is pain and heartbreak. The trouble with us is that the ghetto of the Middle Ages and the children of the twentieth century have to live under one roof, and——"

A sound of crashing dishes came from the kitchen, and the voice of Hanneh Breineh resounded through the dining-room as she wreaked her pent-up fury on the helpless servant.

"Oh, my nerves! I can't stand it any more! There will be no girl again for another week!" cried Fanny.

"Oh, let up on the old lady," protested Abe. "Since she can't take it out on us any more, what harm is it if she cusses the servants?"

"If you fellows had to chase around employment agencies, you wouldn't see anything funny about it. Why can't we move into a hotel that will do away with the need of servants altogether?"

"I got it better," said Jake, consulting a notebook from his pocket. "I have on my list an apartment on

Riverside Drive where there's only a small kitchenette; but we can do away with the cooking, for there is a dining service in the building."

The new Riverside apartment to which Hanneh Breineh was removed by her socially ambitious children was for the habitually active mother an empty desert of enforced idleness. Deprived of her kitchen, Hanneh Breineh felt robbed of the last reason for her existence. Cooking and marketing and puttering busily with pots and pans gave her an excuse for living and struggling and bearing up with her children. The lonely idleness of Riverside Drive stunned all her senses and arrested all her thoughts. It gave her that choked sense of being cut off from air, from life, from everything warm and human. The cold indifference, the each-for-himself look in the eyes of the people about her were like stinging slaps in the face. Even the children had nothing real or human in them. They were starched and stiff miniatures of their elders.

But the most unendurable part of the stifling life on Riverside Drive was being forced to eat in the public dining-room. No matter how hard she tried to learn polite table manners, she always found people staring at her, and her daughter rebuking her for eating with the wrong fork or guzzling the soup or staining the cloth.

In a fit of rebellion Hanneh Breineh resolved never to go down to the public dining-room again, but to make use of the gas-stove in the kitchenette to cook her own meals. That very day she rode down to Delancey Street and purchased a new market-basket. For some time she walked among the haggling pushcart venders, relaxing

and swimming in the warm waves of her old familiar past.

A fish-peddler held up a large carp in his black, hairy hand and waved it dramatically:

"Women! Women! Fourteen cents a pound!"

He ceased his raucous shouting as he saw Hanneh Breineh in her rich attire approach his cart.

"How much?" she asked, pointing to the fattest carp.

"Fifteen cents, lady," said the peddler, smirking as he raised his price.

"Swindler! Didn't I hear you call fourteen cents?" shrieked Hanneh Breineh, exultingly, the spirit of the penny chase surging in her blood. Diplomatically, Hanneh Breineh turned as if to go, and the fisherman seized her basket in frantic fear.

"I should live; I'm losing money on the fish, lady," whined the peddler. "I'll let it down to thirteen cents for you only."

"Two pounds for a quarter, and not a penny more," said Hanneh Breineh, thrilling again with the rare sport of bargaining, which had been her chief joy in the good old days of poverty.

"Nu, I want to make the first sale for good luck." The peddler threw the fish on the scale.

As he wrapped up the fish, Hanneh Breineh saw the driven look of worry in his haggard eyes, and when he counted out the change from her dollar, she waved it aside. "Keep it for your luck," she said, and hurried off to strike a new bargain at a pushcart of onions.

Hanneh Breineh returned triumphantly with her purchases. The basket under her arm gave forth the old, homelike odors of herring and garlic, while the scaly

tail of a four-pound carp protruded from its newspaper wrapping. A gilded placard on the door of the apartment-house proclaimed that all merchandise must be delivered through the trade entrance in the rear; but Hanneh Breineh with her basket strode proudly through the marble-paneled hall and rang nonchalantly for the elevator.

The uniformed hall-man, erect, expressionless, frigid with dignity, stepped forward:

"Just a minute, madam. I'll call a boy to take up your basket for you."

Hanneh Breineh, glaring at him, jerked the basket savagely from his hands. "Mind your own business!" she retorted. "I'll take it up myself. Do you think you're a Russian policeman to boss me in my own house?"

Angry lines appeared on the countenance of the representative of social decorum.

"It is against the rules, madam," he said, stiffly.

"You should sink into the earth with all your rules and brass buttons. Ain't this America? Ain't this a free country? Can't I take up in my own house what I buy with my own money?" cried Hanneh Breineh, reveling in the opportunity to shower forth the volley of invectives that had been suppressed in her for the weeks of deadly dignity of Riverside Drive.

In the midst of this uproar Fanny came in with Mrs. Van Suyden. Hanneh Breineh rushed over to her, crying:

"This bossy policeman won't let me take up my basket in the elevator."

The daughter, unnerved with shame and confusion,

took the basket in her white-gloved hand and ordered the hall-boy to take it around to the regular delivery entrance.

Hanneh Breineh was so hurt by her daughter's apparent defense of the hall-man's rules that she utterly ignored Mrs. Van Suyden's greeting and walked up the seven flights of stairs out of sheer spite.

"You see the tragedy of my life?" broke out Fanny, turning to Mrs. Van Suyden.

"You poor child! You go right up to your dear, old lady mother, and I'll come some other time."

Instantly Fanny regretted her words. Mrs. Van Suyden's pity only roused her wrath the more against her mother.

Breathless from climbing the stairs, Hanneh Breineh entered the apartment just as Fanny tore the faultless millinery creation from her head and threw it on the floor in a rage.

"Mother, you are the ruination of my life! You have driven away Mrs. Van Suyden, as you have driven away all my best friends. What do you think we got this apartment for but to get rid of your fish smells and your brawls with the servants? And here you come with a basket on your arm as if you just landed from steerage! And this afternoon, of all times, when Benny is bringing his leading man to tea. When will you ever stop disgracing us?"

"When I'm dead," said Hanneh Breineh, grimly. "When the earth will cover me up, then you'll be free to go your American way. I'm not going to make myself over for a lady on Riverside Drive. I hate you and all your swell friends. I'll not let myself be choked



up here by you or by that hall-boss policeman that is higher in your eyes than your own mother."

"So that's your thanks for all we've done for you?" cried the daughter.

"All you've done for me!" shouted Hanneh Breineh. "What have you done for me? You hold me like a dog on a chain! It stands in the Talmud; some children give their mothers dry bread and water and go to heaven for it, and some give their mother roast duck and go to Gehenna because it's not given with love."

"You want me to love you yet?" raged the daughter. "You knocked every bit of love out of me when I was yet a kid. All the memories of childhood I have is your everlasting cursing and yelling that we were gluttons."

The bell rang sharply, and Hanneh Breineh flung open the door.

"Your groceries, ma'am," said the boy.

Hanneh Breineh seized the basket from him, and with a vicious fling sent it rolling across the room, strewing its contents over the Persian rugs and inlaid floor. Then seizing her hat and coat, she stormed out of the apartment and down the stairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Pelz sat crouched and shivering over their meager supper when the door opened, and Hanneh Breineh in fur coat and plumed hat charged into the room.

"I come to cry out to you my bitter heart," she sobbed. "Woe is me! It is so black for my eyes!"

"What is the matter with you, Hanneh Breineh?" cried Mrs. Pelz in bewildered alarm.

"I am turned out of my own house by the brass-buttoned policeman that bosses the elevator. Oi-i-i-i!

Weh-h-h-h! What have I from my life? The whole world rings with my son's play. Even the President came to see it, and I, his mother, have not seen it yet. My heart is dying in me like in a prison," she went on wailing. "I am starved out for a piece of real eating. In that swell restaurant is nothing but napkins and forks and lettuce-leaves. There are a dozen plates to every bite of food. And it looks so fancy on the plate, but it's nothing but straw in the mouth. I'm starving, but I can't swallow down their American eating."

"Hanneh Breineh," said Mrs. Pelz, "you are sinning before God. Look on your fur coat; it alone would feed a whole family for a year. I never had yet a piece of fur trimming on a coat, and you are in fur from the neck to the feet. I never had yet a piece of feather on a hat, and your hat is all feathers."

"What are you envying me?" protested Hanneh Breineh. "What have I from all my fine furs and feathers when my children are strangers to me? All the fur coats in the world can't warm up the loneliness inside my heart. All the grandest feathers can't hide the bitter shame in my face that my children shame themselves from me."

Hanneh Breineh suddenly loomed over them like some ancient, heroic figure of the Bible, condemning unrighteousness.

"Why should my children shame themselves from me? From where did they get the stuff to work themselves up in the world? Did they get it from the air? How did they get all their smartness to rise over the people around them? Why don't the children of born American mothers write my Benny's plays? It is I, who

never had a chance to be a person, who gave him the fire in his head. If I would have had a chance to go to school and learn the language, what couldn't I have been? It is I and my mother and my mother's mother and my father and father's father who had such a black life in Poland; it is our choked thoughts and feelings that are flaming up in my children and making them great in America. And yet they shame themselves from me!"

For a moment Mr. and Mrs. Pelz were hypnotized by the sweep of her words. Then Hanneh Breineh sank into a chair in utter exhaustion. She began to weep bitterly, her body shaking with sobs.

"Woe is me! For what did I suffer and hope on my children? A bitter old age—my end. I'm so lonely!"

All the dramatic fire seemed to have left her. The spell was broken. They saw the Hanneh Breineh of old, ever discontented, ever complaining even in the midst of riches and plenty.

"Hanneh Breineh," said Mrs. Pelz, "the only trouble with you is that you got it too good. People will tear the eyes out of your head because you're complaining yet. If I only had your fur coat! If I only had your diamonds! I have nothing. You have everything. You are living on the fat of the land. You go right back home and thank God that you don't have my bitter lot."

"You got to let me stay here with you," insisted Hanneh Breineh. "I'll not go back to my children except when they bury me. When they will see my dead face, they will understand how they killed me."

Mrs. Pelz glanced nervously at her husband. They

barely had enough covering for their one bed; how could they possibly lodge a visitor?

"I don't want to take up your bed," said Hanneh Breineh. "I don't care if I have to sleep on the floor or on the chairs, but I'll stay here for the night."

Seeing that she was bent on staying, Mr. Pelz prepared to sleep by putting a few chairs next to the trunk, and Hanneh Breineh was invited to share the rickety bed with Mrs. Pelz.

The mattress was full of lumps and hollows. Hanneh Breineh lay cramped and miserable, unable to stretch out her limbs. For years she had been accustomed to hair mattresses and ample woolen blankets, so that though she covered herself with her fur coat, she was too cold to sleep. But worse than the cold were the creeping things on the wall. And as the lights were turned low, the mice came through the broken plaster and raced across the floor. The foul odors of the kitchen-sink added to the night of horrors.

"Are you going back home?" asked Mrs. Pelz, as Hanneh Breineh put on her hat and coat the next morning.

"I don't know where I'm going," she replied, as she put a bill into Mrs. Pelz's hand.

For hours Hanneh Breineh walked through the crowded ghetto streets. She realized that she no longer could endure the sordid ugliness of her past, and yet she could not go home to her children. She only felt that she must go on and on.

In the afternoon a cold, drizzling rain set in. She was worn out from the sleepless night and hours of tramping. With a piercing pain in her heart she at last

turned back and boarded the subway for Riverside Drive. She had fled from the marble sepulcher of the Riverside apartment to her old home in the ghetto; but now she knew that she could not live there again. She had outgrown her past by the habits of years of physical comforts, and these material comforts that she could no longer do without choked and crushed the life within her.

A cold shudder went through Hanneh Breineh as she approached the apartment house. Peering through the plate glass of the door, she saw the face of the uniformed hall-man. For a hesitating moment she remained standing in the drizzling rain, unable to enter, and yet knowing full well that she would have to enter.

Then suddenly Hanneh Breineh began to laugh. She realized that it was the first time she had laughed since her children had become rich. But it was the hard laugh of bitter sorrow. Tears streamed down her furrowed cheeks as she walked slowly up the granite steps.

"The fat of the land!" muttered Hanneh Breineh, with a choking sob as the hall-man with immobile face deferentially swung open the door—"the fat of the land!"

## THE LITTLE SILVER HEART \*

BY JOSEPHINE DASKAM BACON

THE trouble is that ever since it happened Connie hasn't been able to remember so well about the strange things at Aunt Betsy's. It all seems to slip away from her, and more and more all the time. It is a very good thing she told Ben and me about it as soon as she got here, because now she will even ask Ben questions, like, "What was it I said when they asked me whether she talked to me?" or, "Where was I sitting when I saw her?"

The reason why Connie went out to Aunt Betsy's was because she had too many dreams at night and recited poetry all the time. It was the doctor himself that sent her there. She used to be his nurse, and he used to spend the summer with her when he was a little boy. It took only an hour on the train and then a long drive, but when you got there it was 'way back in the country.

Aunt Betsy was quite old, and her niece, Mrs. Annie, took care of her. There was another niece, Mrs. Edward, that took care of Gran'ma Biggs, down in the cottage, and there was Ann Ellen, that was the maid. That is, she was the maid in one way, because she did the washing and other things, but she ate at the table with them and she called Mrs. Annie "Annie." She had a bad temper, but she sang nice songs, and when she wasn't

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busy she told Connie stories of the Indian massacres.

You might think it would be lonely there, with nobody to play with, but for a long time, almost a week, Connie didn't think so. To begin with, it was a very interesting house indeed. There was a bookcase in the sitting-room with all kinds of queer books in it; there was a music-box, square, that played four tunes, with a looking-glass in it; and a big tall screen made of white cloth like sheets and pillow-cases. This cloth was entirely covered up with pictures, plain and colored, and little bits of poetry and jokes and photographs and colored birds of all kinds, pasted on to exactly fit each other, so that not a speck of cloth showed except where some had been torn off. It was made by Dr. Welles and his brothers when they were boys, and Connie spent hours reading it: both sides were covered.

There were some queer-looking photographs in there, and a melodeon that Connie used to go in and play on whenever she got the chance, but that wasn't often, because they made her stay outdoors all the time. She was sorry for that, because the melodeon sounded so sad and loud, and it made her think about things long ago that she had nearly forgotten, she said.

She used to hear about Gran'ma Biggs, but for some time she didn't see her, because, though she often went down to the cottage on errands, Mrs. Edward was always in the kitchen, and there didn't seem to be anybody about but Mr. Biggs, her husband, and he never said a word. For two months that she was there Connie never heard him open his mouth but once, and then he said only two words.

Well, one day when Connie went down to get some pickled pears, Mrs. Edward wasn't in the kitchen and Connie went through into the next room, and it was a bedroom, strange to say. In it was a big, high bed with long ruffles like skirts around the bottom, and a great big bureau with glass knobs, and Connie said she didn't believe the windows had been opened for a year. There was a little thin old woman in the bed in a queer white nightcap, just as in old-fashioned pictures. She was very old indeed, with only a few teeth, and she was brown and wrinkled and had very bright eyes. She was staring straight at Connie, so Connie felt she ought to say something, and she said: "How do you do? I hope you're feeling better, Gran'ma Biggs," for she knew who it must be.

"Why," said Gran'ma Biggs, "if it ain't little Lorilla! How air ye, Lorilla, child? I ain't seen ye for weeks. Why ain't ye been down?"

"I'm Constantia Van Cott," said Connie, "and you've never met me before, but I'm glad to know you." Connie is always very polite.

Then Gran'ma Biggs began to laugh, such a queer laugh—like a squeaky door, Connie told us.

"Allus up to your monkey tricks," she said. "I never see such a child for games. Seem's if you had to play sump'n different every time you come. Well, come an' shake hands with old gran'ma, anyway."

So Connie went up to the bed, and she says that unless a parrot ever climbed up on your fingers you never will know what it felt like to shake hands with Gran'ma Biggs.

"Ain't you brought Spot?" said gran'ma. "I thought you allers brought her. Didn't I hear her bark?"

"That's old Nig that came up with me," Connie told her; "he has a good many spots, but that's not his name."

Just then Mrs. Edward came running in, all out of breath.

"What are you doing in here?" she asked Connie, quite crossly, and then she said to Gran'ma Biggs, "Mother, I hope you haven't been talking any nonsense."

"Well, I guess not," said gran'ma. "I'm too glad to see Lorilla to talk nonsense. Why ain't you let her down before? Here I've been a-beggin' and a-prayin' for her, an' you puttin' me off for weeks—or months, for aught I know. But the dear child's come fin'ly to see her gran'ma, all by herself, ain't you, lovey?"

"This ain't Lorilla, mother; it's the little girl Fred sent down—don't you remember I told you?" said Mrs. Edward, very quick and shaking her head at Gran'ma Biggs.

"An' Spot, too—I ain't seen old Spotty for a long time," Gran'ma went on.

Mrs. Edward took hold of Connie's arm and just dragged her out of the room.

"That's not Spot, mother; you remember when she died; 'twas ten years ago, an' the pup's thirteen now. You remember little Nig that upset the milk, don't you?" she asked gran'ma, and she tried to shut the door. But Gran'ma Biggs sat right up in bed and shook her fist at her; and Connie said it was dreadful to see her, with her arm all brown and thin and her old hooked nose.

"Then you bring me Lorilla right off," she called

out, "and no shenannigan about it! I'll speak to Edward to-night, mind you that."

But by that time the door was shut, and Mrs. Edward walked home with Connie.

"You mustn't mind mother," she told her; "her mind sort o' wanders; you see she's 'most ninety years old. Spot's been dead these ten years."

"And Lorilla," says Connie. "Is she dead, too?"

"I don't see how you ever got in there," said Mrs. Edward; "it beats all how things will go wrong some days. Sick people are a great care."

You see she never answered Connie's question at all. As soon as they got back she sent Connie out to play, and then she called Mrs. Annie and Aunt Betsy, and Connie knew perfectly well that she was telling them about it, from the way they looked out of the window at her.

Well, just about then Connie began to get lonely. She thought how all the girls at Elmbank had somebody to play with, and there she was with only an old spotted dog for a companion. There wasn't any house but the cottage for a long distance, and she began to feel how all alone and deserted everything was—anything might happen to them there, with no telephone. And just then it clouded over and thundered and some drops fell, and Connie thought she might as well begin to cry then and there, she felt so sad and lonesome.

She went into the house by the side door and up the back stairs, and started to go into the little hall that led to her room; but when she pushed in the door it wasn't that little hall at all, but some attic stairs. Connie was so surprised she stopped crying and went

on up the stairs. The ceiling sloped down to the floor at each end and it was quite dim, because there were only a few little windows and they were very cobwebby; besides, the rain made things dark. There were one or two old trunks there and some queer bandboxes and a little tin bath-tub, all painted with flowers. There were several broken chairs with painted backs and seats made of that stuff that looks like straw, and a wooden crib that shut up like a camp-chair in the middle. There was a dusty old wire cage for a squirrel, and a whole lot of dried catnip tied up in bunches, and other smelly things.

Connie poked along to see how small she would have to bow down as the roof got lower and lower, and just as she was going to get on her hands and knees she stumbled over a little trunk. It was so small that she knew it must have been a doll's trunk, and she sat right down and opened it, because, though she never would touch any of the other trunks and boxes for the world, of course she felt that she had a right to see the little-girl things.

The first thing in the trunk was a pile of doll's clothes; they weren't very nice, but they were made just as well as if the cloth had been better, but very old-fashioned. And it must have been a grown-up doll, too, because there were hats for it, with strings like Aunt Betsy's. And there were nightcaps like Gran'ma Biggs's.

Under the clothes were some other playthings—a long string all covered with buttons of many different sorts, a little box with the top all made of shells pasted on close together, and a little cup made of striped shiny wood that had printed on it, *Made of wood from Mt. Tom*,

*Massachusetts*. In the shell box there was a lock of black curly hair tied with blue ribbon in an envelope, and on it was written, "My dear Spotty's hair when she was six months old." In another envelope was some yellow hair, not real, and that said, "A lock of Estella's old hair that was burned when Fred sent the new wig." You see, that was the doll. There was one more with brown hair, but the writing was all scratched out so that Connie couldn't read it.

Under the box was a book, in a cover made of brown cloth like what is behind furniture sometimes; it was called *The Third Reader*. They used to learn to read in books like that, but Connie says we'd better be thankful that we don't now, for the stories in this one were silly. They were babyish, and the poetry especially. There was no name in the front, but instead it said, "If my name you wish to see, look on page one hundred and three." She turned to that page, and then it said, "If my name you still would find, look on page marked fifty-nine." So she looked there, and there was the name: "Lorilla Biggs. If on this name you chance to look, think of me and close the book."

And that is just what Connie did. She would have been so glad if Lorilla had been there; it was all she needed to make her contented—somebody to play with, you see. She said it almost seemed as if Lorilla *was* there, because there were her things and the locks of hair and the writing that said to think of her. It was almost dark, and Connie played that Lorilla was over behind one of the trunks, and that the noise the rain made on the roof was her feet running around. She said afterwards she wouldn't have been surprised if



Lorilla had come out any minute. But of course she didn't, and Connie knew well enough that she must either be dead or grown up by this time.

The sound of the rain made her feel sleepy, it was so quiet in there, and the catnip and things smelled so strong, too—such things always make Con sleepy. So she fell asleep, and the water leaked in right over her shoulder, and when she woke up she was quite wet, and the doll's things, too. It was awfully dark and she was scared to death, so she just tumbled the things under the trunk and felt her way downstairs, and changed her dress quickly so that Mrs. Annie shouldn't be worried, for her throat felt sore.

Well, they were so delighted to see her, they never scolded her a bit, for they'd been out hunting all over for her; they thought she was lost somewhere. And Aunt Betsy kissed her, and they all cried, and Mrs. Edward's husband said, "Well, well!" That's every word she ever heard him say.

Of course she told them where she had been, and then she said, "Was Lorilla your sister, Mrs. Annie?"

Connie says they looked at her and then at each other and never said a word. Then they all began to say something, and all stopped together. Finally Aunt Betsy said: "Well, Annie, there's no need to make a bad matter worse by fightin' the truth. Nobody knows what mother's said, so we might's well out with it."

"All right," said Mrs. Annie; "you're in charge, and what you say goes. I guess the truth's the best myself."

So then she told Connie about little Lorilla. She was their sister Etta's little girl, and her father died when she was a baby, so she was all her mother had, and her

mother was dreadful choice of her, Mrs. Annie said. She was pretty and good and a real comfort, and Gran'ma Biggs just worshiped the ground she walked on. She had to play most of the time by herself, because she was the only child, but she was real contented, and she set great store by Spot; they'd play by the hour together, "just like you and old Nig," Mrs. Annie said. She was eleven years old, like Connie, and she had dreadful old-fashioned ways and sewed patchwork just like a woman. She made the quilt in Connie's room.

Well, one morning Spot went off to the river to take a swim, and while she was gone Lorilla said she guessed she'd go out and try to find some closed gentians for her mother, because they were her mother's favorite flower, and September was the month to find them. So they said all right, and her mother said to kiss her good-by. And Lorilla laughed and said she wouldn't be gone long enough for that; but then she changed her mind and came back and kissed her. "I'll kiss you, too, Aunt Annie," she said; and then Aunt Betsy pretended to cry and said, "No kiss for poor old Aunt Betsy?" Then Lorilla nearly cried herself, because she thought Aunt Betsy was in earnest, and she was too tender-hearted to hurt a fly. She went out after she gave her a kiss, too, and shut the door after her very carefully, the way she always did. And they never saw her again.

They hunted and they hunted for weeks and weeks, and poor old Spot used to run around the barn where they used to play together, howling and crying till they had to chain her up, but they never found any sign of her. Dr. Welles's father sent three detectives up there,

and everybody for miles around helped them hunt, and they arrested a band of gypsies that was roaming about, a mile away, and thought they had her once, but they couldn't prove that the gypsies had seen her, and they had to let them go. After the gypsies had got away they found out that three or four of them had escaped before the rest were caught, and gone away on a train, and people always thought they were the ones that had little Lorilla. Her mother lived only a year after that; she just pined off, Mrs. Annie said. But she always said Lorilla was dead, and she was the only one that thought that, for everybody else was sure she was living with the gypsies or carried away into another country.

Of course that was very exciting and interesting, and Connie asked so many questions that she didn't have time to tell about her throat, and it got sorer all the time. She dreamed about Lorilla all night, and the next morning she went out with old Nig and walked along by the river and pretended that she was going to meet her there, after Lorilla got the gentians, and that they were going to play. Finally she got tired pretending to wait, and she thought all of a sudden that she might just as well pretend Lorilla *had* come. So she did. She said she felt rather silly when she first said: "Why, here you are at last, Lorilla! I'd about given you up," but after that it was just as easy as anything, and before long she was talking away, first for herself and then for Lorilla, and having quite a nice time. It wasn't nearly so lonely, of course, and it was fun to plan out what Lorilla would have said. At first she used to stop and think, but after a while she answered back very quickly, not stopping at all, and sometimes she would

speak so fast that she really didn't know what she was going to say, and it surprised her when she'd said it—if you see what I mean. If you knew Con, you wouldn't be surprised that she got so excited doing this that her head ached, and she never went home till they came to get her for dinner. She wouldn't tell about her throat then, for she wanted to get right back to Lorilla, and she was afraid Mrs. Annie would make her go to bed. So she went directly there and sat down by the river and began to play again.

While she was playing she happened to look behind her and saw somebody walking through the trees. Of course she stopped talking and felt ashamed of herself to be making so much noise all alone, and she was afraid whoever it was would laugh, because she was talking with two voices, one for Lorilla and one for herself. She waited for them to get by, and then she began again. But when she looked around to make sure, she saw somebody step behind a bush, and she could see that it was a woman, for she saw her dress and her sunbonnet. She supposed it was Mrs. Annie coming to see what she was doing, and got up to catch her, but she hid behind some of the bushes and kept so still that Con got very cross and nearly cried, she felt so tired and her head ached so. Finally she called out, "You can hide there all day if you want to; I sha'n't hunt!" and went back to her place. But she only whispered then, partly to tease Mrs. Annie and partly because she hated to have anybody hear her. But she knew that nobody had gone away, for she listened carefully, and suddenly she turned around, and it wasn't Mrs. Annie, after all, but a little girl not much bigger than Connie herself. Connie stared

at her for a minute, but she looked very scared, and jumped behind a big tree that was there, and all of a sudden Con got frightened herself, it was so still there, and called Nig and ran home. She looked around once or twice, but she didn't see the little girl, which she was sorry for, because she looked nice, though scared. When she got to the house she asked what little girl lived around there, and Mrs. Annie said, not any.

"Did you see one?" she asked her, and when Connie told her about it she laughed and said that it must be Henry Barber's little girl from Waite's Falls. "Henry comes once a week to see if we want any pot-cheese or buttermilk and to get the rags for his wife to make her rugs of," she said, "and I told him last week to bring Josie with him to visit with you. She's dreadful shy, and I guess when she saw you she couldn't come up to the scratch. You oughtn't to 'a' run, though."

Pretty soon Mrs. Edward came over and Mrs. Annie told her about Josie, but Mrs. Edward said that Henry Barber had just driven by and Josie wasn't with him.

"Well, then, he's left her in the woods there, and Connie'd better run right back and hunt her up," said Mrs. Annie; so Connie went back and hunted and called, but for a long time she couldn't find anybody. Once or twice, though, she saw her just ahead, and then she'd call out: "Oh, please wait! Please stay till I catch up, Josie!" One time the little girl waited till Con was quite near, and turned and smiled, but then she looked scared again, and slipped off to one side, where the bushes were thick. Finally Connie thought she'd sit down and pretend not to notice, and see if she'd come up; so she sat down on a big stone and shut her eyes



and waited, and when she opened them softly there was the little girl standing quite near, looking at her. Connie kept on sitting still, and by and by the little girl sat down near her and watched her. So then Connie smiled and she smiled, and they smiled back and forth, and at last Connie asked her if she knew that her father had started home without her, and she shook her head.

"We'd better start on and see if we can catch him," Connie said. "Come on!" and she jumped up, but that frightened the little girl, and she was up like lightning and running away. She ran so quick and so soft that the leaves rustling covered up the footsteps, and once Connie lost track of her she couldn't get her again. By this time poor Con was pretty tired, and she was so disappointed she began to cry; and when she got back they had to get her some cookies and milk before she could stop. Mrs. Annie was awfully cross with Josie for being so silly, and told Connie never to mind; she'd take her up to the Barbers' and teach Josie manners if her own mother couldn't.

"She'll come round all right," she said; "those black eyes o' hers'll snap when she sees what I've brought her—I know what she likes."

"Her eyes aren't black—they're gray," said Connie; "and if she doesn't like me, she needn't, so there!"

"What you talkin' about, child? Her eyes are black as ink," said Mrs. Edward.

Then Connie lost her temper and pushed away the cooky, which didn't taste very good, anyway, and contradicted dreadfully.

"Her eyes are not black—they are as gray as mine," she said, very crossly.



"There, there!" Mrs. Annie said; "don't mind the child; she's tired to death, and she looks to me as if she'd caught a chill besides."

She made Connie change her stockings and gave her some milk toast for supper; but it didn't taste good, but bitter, like the cooky, and Connie was glad to go to bed. But she woke up in the middle of the night, and couldn't get to sleep again for a long time. She thought about little Lorilla, and how nice it would have been if she had been at Aunt Betsy's, and how they would have played together and told stories and slept in the same room, and it seemed to her she simply couldn't bear it to stay there alone much longer. She thought maybe she'd go to sleep if she could count a few stars, which she'd heard makes you sleepy, and she got up and sat on the window-sill and looked out. It was so still she could hear the leaves rustle on trees a long way off, and Gran'ma Biggs's cottage and the barn at the end of the lane behind it looked like pictures of houses, all flat. Just as she started to count the stars on top of the barn she saw something move beside it, and when she looked down near the ground she saw it was a person, stealing quietly around the corner of the barn, and she knew by the sunbonnet and the apron that it was the little girl. At first she couldn't believe it, but the more she looked the more she was sure, and then she leaned out of the window and waved her hand, hoping to get her attention and then go down and let her in. The little girl didn't seem to dare to go very far from the barn, because as soon as she had taken a few steps she'd turn around and run behind it again, just the way she did by the river. But Connie kept on

waving—of course she didn't dare call out loud—and pretty soon she thought the little girl saw her, for she tipped her bonnet high as though she was looking up, and started along toward the cottage. In a moment she was by it, and then she came into the lane, and pretty soon she was quite near Aunt Betsy's house. Then Connie was sure she saw her, for she waved her hand and hurried faster, when all of a sudden, just as she reached the well, Nig began to bark and howl. It was a dreadful noise, coming when everything was so still, and it frightened Connie so that she screamed and nearly fell out of the window. It frightened the little girl still more, for she turned right around and ran back to the barn, and disappeared behind it.

Of course that woke up Mrs. Annie, and she came running to Connie's room, and when Connie told her that the little girl hadn't found her father, after all, but was hiding behind the barn and too afraid to come out, Mrs. Annie stared at her in the strangest way and said: "Child, you're dreaming. There's no little girl there. You've been walking in your sleep."

"I think I know a person when I see one," said Connie, half crying, "and she waved her hand to me, too. You go down behind the barn and you'll see."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Mrs. Edward. "Look here, child; Josie Barber's down with the measles, and how could she be here? Henry told me so himself; he stopped in after you went to bed."

"Then it's some other little girl," said Connie, "and she's out all alone behind the barn," but they put her back into bed and said that there wasn't any little girl that it could be, and made her go to sleep.

So Connie went to sleep, and she dreamed that she and little Lorilla were playing in the barn, and the hay got into her nose and choked her, and she was dying, and Lorilla shook her and said, "Wake up! Wake up!" and she woke up with a jump, all hot and stuffy and choking.

Well, I suppose you'll think she was crazy, but she got up out of bed and put on her wrapper and her shoes and stockings, and opened the door softly and started downstairs. She said she had to go and find that little girl. She just had to. And she was so hot besides, she thought it would be cooler outdoors. Her head felt very big, and she says that she skipped down the stairs just like dancing, as you do in dreams. She went out by the kitchen door very softly, and it was beautiful in the yard, almost light, with only one big star and the sky a kind of white. You could see everything very plainly, and she wasn't a bit afraid. It smelled so good that she felt very happy, and she ran along the path to the barn, in that dancing kind of way, so quickly that she got there in a moment, though it was really quite a long way.

And there was the little girl waiting for her, just as she knew she would be. She wasn't a bit shy by that time, and they began to play directly. Connie meant to ask her why she didn't go home to bed, and where she lived, but she forgot all about it somehow, and her head felt so big and queer that she couldn't remember much of anything. We've often asked Connie what they played, but it made her very cross after a while, because at first she used to say, "Oh, we just played, that's all," and finally she had to own up that she

couldn't remember, but they had a beautiful time. We asked her what the little girl talked about, and at first she used to say, "Oh, everything, you know—just different things"; but when Ben asked her to tell one thing—just some one thing that the little girl said—she thought very hard and finally said that she couldn't remember one word, really; but of course she must have talked, or they couldn't have played, could they?

After a while Con got sleepy and wanted the little girl to come in and go to bed, but she wouldn't go so far from the barn; she'd run behind it if she heard a noise, and once when the black rooster, that always woke up first, began to crow, she ran in and made Connie hunt a long time before she found her. That made Connie cross and her head ached terribly, and she felt dizzy, too, so she said she was going back to the house unless the little girl told her the secret place she hid in. Then the little girl put her fingers on her lips and looked very wise, and beckoned to Connie to come and see something, and not make any noise; and Con went softly after her. She knelt down and swept away some hay from the back of the floor and caught her finger nail into a little kind of crack in the board and lifted the board up and pointed down. And there was a lovely little place under the floor, just big enough to hide in, and the board would drop back, and nobody would ever in the world guess you were there. Then Con was ashamed for being so cross and begged the little girl's pardon, the place was so fine; and she smiled very kindly, and took off her neck a blue ribbon with a silver heart strung on it and held it out to Connie. Connie put out her hand for it, but before she touched it the little

girl let go of it and it dropped into the secret place and the board fell back, and there it was—gone.

"Look out! Look out!" Connie called, very loud, and the little girl gave a jump and Connie fell down, and when she got up the little girl was gone. Connie said she felt as if she'd been asleep and just waked up, and she knew she was sick or something, her head was so queer and her legs shook. She ran out of the barn and stumbled along to the house and fell asleep right on the kitchen floor, and Mrs. Annie found her there when she came down.

Now, what do you think? When Connie told them where she went and about the little girl, they just looked at each other and told her she dreamed it. They said she had walked in her sleep to the kitchen door and never gone any farther.

And Aunt Betsy said: "Annie, I'm going to write for Fred this minute. You get the quinine now. It's chills 'n' fever."

Well, that was too much for poor Con to bear, and she burst out crying and couldn't stop.

"Go out to the barn, then, if you don't believe me, and get into the secret place and find the silver heart she gave me—then you'll see!" she told them, sobbing and crying.

Hardly had she said that, when Aunt Betsy put her hand up to her belt and tumbled over in her chair, and Mrs. Annie and Mrs. Edward stared at Connie and swallowed in their throats; and Mrs. Annie whispered:

"The heart? The silver heart? Which one? Tell me, deary; tell Aunt Annie."



So Connie told them, and Mrs. Edward got up and said: "The Lord help poor Etta, girls—she's seen Lorilla's locket! I'm going for Mr. Weed, an' you look after Betsy."

Connie said that after that nobody seemed to pay any attention to her, and when they did they stared at her and didn't pet her at all, and she felt bad, too. Aunt Betsy cried and cried, and the coffee boiled all over the stove and smelled dreadfully, and Connie took a great big cup, and they never said a word. It made her feel very well and her head got small again. She had to sit in the room with Aunt Betsy, and nobody did a thing till Mr. Weed came, and then she had to tell him the whole thing over again. And he shook his head and asked her to describe the locket; and when she said it was on a blue ribbon, Aunt Betsy cried harder than ever.

"Come out with me to the barn, my child," said Mr. Weed, and they went, and some other people that Connie had never seen before, and Mr. Barber and the hired man and Ann Ellen. And Connie went right to the place and pushed away the hay, and the board wasn't there at all, but smaller ones, all nailed down tight. It had been changed, and now she knew they wouldn't believe her, and she began to cry.

"You see, my child," said Mr. Weed, and he looked very sadly at her, "you have made a great deal of pain for these poor sisters, and to no purpose. There is no board here such as you describe."

"But there was, there was!" Connie cried out; "it was as wide as three of these boards and loose at the end, and dark brown. And now some one has covered



it up, and I can't get my locket, and the little girl gave it to me."

Just then Henry, the hired man, stepped out and coughed and said: "This here floor ain't only been laid but eight years, Mis' Edward, since I come, and the old boards was like she says. It was laid right on top o' the other."

Then Mr. Weed looked very sharply at Henry, and Mrs. Annie gave a scream and ran to the place and began to pick at the nails.

"Oh, Mr. Weed! Oh, poor Etta!" she cried out. "I remember now. That's what Lorilla meant. She told me one day that if ever the Indians sh'd come again they'd never get her, for she knew a place they'd never find in a hundred years. 'I'll be safe there, Aunt Annie,' says she, 'you'll see;' but she never'd tell me. It was under there—my poor baby, 'twas under there!"

Connie couldn't move a step, her legs shook so, and Mr. Weed held her hand so tight.

"My friends," he said, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings a strange matter has been disclosed to us. Let some one bring a chisel and a hammer!"

Henry went away, and suddenly Aunt Betsy sat right down on the floor and made motions to Mrs. Annie.

"Annie," she said, very hoarse, just as if she had caught cold,—“Annie. 'Twas the day she went away that we had the hay in!”

When Henry came back there were more people with him, and it was so still you could hear the long nails squeak when he knocked the boards up. When he had got them off—he broke them at the other end—Connie pulled her hand away and ran. "There's my board,"

she said, "and here's where you put your finger nail," and she fitted her nail in and pulled the board back a little way. "I told you somebody had covered it up," she said, "now I'll find my locket," and she started to look in, but Mr. Weed pulled her back.

"Hush, my child!" he said, and Connie says his hand was cold as ice; "go back with the women. I will look."

He looked down and jumped back, and then he looked again, with his hand out behind him so nobody could come.

Everybody was crying but Connie, and she was feeling queerer and queerer.

"My friends," he said, very gentle and still, "let us pray."

Then he made a prayer and everybody knelt down, and Connie can't remember what he said except the end: "Who in Thine own good time revealest everything, so that we may be at peace. Amen."

"And now please give me my locket," says Connie, who tried to be polite while he was praying, "for my throat is so sore."

And he leaned down over the secret place and put down his hand a moment, and then he held it out, and there, tied to an old grayish kind of string, was a little silver heart.

Mrs. Annie gave a long sigh, like when you hold your breath, and then, Connie says, the floor sank down under her and left her standing in the air, and she seemed to forget everything after that, but somebody carried her away. And when she got well she was at home, and Ben and I came to see her.

She has never seen them again, Mrs. Annie and Mrs. Edward and Gran'ma Biggs, and nobody would tell her anything about them, so she has nearly forgotten, now; but Ben thinks that nothing in any book is more wonderful than this story of little Lorilla.

## HUMORESQUE \*

By FANNIE HURST

ON either side of the Bowery, which cuts through like a drain to catch its sewage, Every Man's Land, a reeking march of humanity and humidity, steams with the excrement of seventeen languages, flung in *patois* from tenement windows, fire-escapes, curbs, stoops, and cellars whose walls are terrible and spongy with fungi.

By that impregnable chemistry of race whereby the red blood of the Mongolian and the red blood of the Caucasian become as oil and water in the mingling, Mulberry Street, bounded by sixteen languages, runs its intact Latin length of push-carts, clothes-lines, naked babies, drying vermicelli; black-eyed women in rhinestone combs and perennially big with child; whole families of buttonhole-makers, who first saw the blue-and-gold light of Sorrento, bent at home work round a single gas flare; pomaded barbers of a thousand Neapolitan amours. And then, just as suddenly, almost without osmosis and by the mere stepping down from the curb, Mulberry becomes Mott Street, hung in grill-work balconies, the moldy smell of poverty touched up with incense. Orientals whose feet shuffle and whose faces are carved out of satin-wood. Forbidden women,

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their white, drugged faces behind upper windows. Yellow children, incongruous enough in Western clothing. A draughty areaway with an oblique of gaslight and a black well of descending staircase. Show-windows of jade and tea and Chinese porcelains.

More streets emanating out from Mott like a handful of crooked rheumatic fingers, then suddenly the Bowery again, cowering beneath Elevated trains, where men burned down to the butt end of soiled lives pass in and out and out and in of the knee-high swinging doors, a veiny-nosed, acid-eaten race in themselves.

Allen Street, too, still more easterly, and half as wide, is straddled its entire width by the steely, long-legged skeleton of Elevated traffic, so that its third-floor windows no sooner shudder into silence from the rushing shock of one train than they are shaken into chatter by the passage of another. Indeed, third-floor dwellers of Allen Street, reaching out, can almost touch the serrated edges of the Elevated structure, and in summer the smell of its hot rails becomes an actual taste in the mouth. Passengers, in turn, look in upon this horizontal of life as they whiz by. Once, in fact, the blurry figure of what might have been a woman leaned out, as she passed, to toss into one Abrahm Kantor's apartment a short-stemmed pink carnation. It hit softly on little Leon Kantor's crib, brushing him fragrantly across the mouth and causing him to pucker up.

Beneath, where even in August noonday, the sun cannot find its way by a chink, and babies lie stark naked in the cavernous shade, Allen Street presents a sort of submarine and greenish gloom, as if its humanity were

actually moving through a sea of aqueous shadows, faces rather bleached and shrunk. And then, like a shimmering background of orange-finned and copper-flanked marine life, the brass-shops of Allen Street, whole rows of them, burn flamelessly and without benefit of fuel.

To enter Abrahm Kantor's—Brasses, was three steps down, so that his casement show-window, at best filmed over with the constant rain of dust ground down from the rails above, was obscure enough, but crammed with copied loot of khedive and of czar. The seven-branch candlestick so Biblical and supplicating of arms. An urn, shaped like Rebecca's, of brass, all beaten over with little pocks. Things—cups, trays, knockers, ikons, gargoyles, bowls, and teapots. A symphony of bells in graduated sizes. Jardinières with fat sides. A pot-bellied samovar. A swinging-lamp for the dead, star-shaped. Against the door, an octave of tubular chimes, prisms of voiceless harmony and of heatless light.

Opening this door, they rang gently, like melody heard through water and behind glass. Another bell rang, too, in tilted singsong from a pulley operating somewhere in the catacomb rear of this lambent vale of things and things and things. In turn, this pulley set in toll still another bell, two flights up in Abrahm Kantor's tenement, which overlooked the front of whizzing rails and a rear wilderness of gibbet-looking clothes-lines, dangling perpetual specters of flapping union suits in a mid-air flaky with soot.

Often at lunch, or even the evening meal, this bell would ring in on Abrahm Kantor's digestive well-being, and while he hurried down, napkin often bib-fashion



still about his neck, and into the smoldering lanes of copper, would leave an eloquent void at the head of his well-surrounded table.

This bell was ringing now, jingling in upon the slumber of a still newer Kantor, snuggling peacefully enough within the ammoniac depths of a cradle recently evacuated by Leon, heretofore impinged upon you.

On her knees before an oven that billowed forth hotly into her face, Mrs. Kantor, fairly fat and not yet forty, and at the immemorial task of plumbing a delicately swelling layer cake with broom-straw, raised her face, reddened and faintly moist.

"Isadore, run down and say your papa is out until six. If it's a customer, remember the first asking-price is the two middle figures on the tag, and the last asking-price is the two outside figures. See once, with your papa out to buy your little brother his birthday present, and your mother in a cake, if you can't make a sale for first price."

Isadore Kantor, aged eleven and hunched with a younger Kantor over an oilcloth-covered table, hunched himself still deeper in a barter for a large crystal marble with a candy stripe down its center.

"Izzie, did you hear me?"

"Yes'm."

"Go down this minute—do you hear? Rudolph, stop always letting your big brother get the best of you in marbles. Iz-zie!"

"In-a-minute."

"Don't let me have to ask you again, Isadore Kantor!"

"Aw, ma, I got some 'rithmetic to do. Let Esther go!"

"Always Esther! Your sister stays right in the front room with her spelling."

"Aw, ma, I got spelling, too."

"Every time I ask that boy he should do me one thing, right away he gets lessons! With me, that lessons-talk don't go no more. Every time you get put down in school, I'm surprised there's a place left lower where they can put you. Working-papers for such a boy like you!"

"I'll woik——"

"How I worried myself! Violin lessons yet—thirty cents a lesson out of your papa's pants while he slept! That's how I wanted to have in the family a profession—maybe a musician on the violin! Lessons for you out of money I had to lie to your papa about! Honest, when I think of it—my own husband—it's a wonder I don't potch you just for remembering it. Rudolph, will you stop licking that cake-pan? It's saved for your little brother Leon. Ain't you ashamed even on your little brother's birthday to steal from him?"

"Ma, gimme the spoon?"

"I'll give you the spoon, Isadore Kantor, where you don't want it. If you don't hurry down, the way that bell is ringing, not one bite do you get out of your little brother's birthday-cake to-night!"

"I'm goin', ain't I?"

"Always on my children's birthdays a meanness sets into this house! Ru-dolph, will you put down that bowl! Iz-zie—for the last time I ask you—for the last time——"

Erect now, Mrs. Kantor lifted an expressive hand, letting it hover.

"I'm goin', ma; for golly sakes, I'm goin'!" said her recalcitrant one, shuffling off toward the staircase, shuffling, shuffling.

Then Mrs. Kantor resumed her plumbing, and through the little apartment, its middle and only bedroom of three beds and a crib lighted vicariously by the front room and kitchen, began to wind the warm, the golden-brown fragrance of cake in the rising.

By six o'clock the shades were drawn against the dirty dusk of Allen Street and the oilcloth-covered table dragged out center and spread by Esther Kantor, nine in years, in the sturdy little legs bulging over shoe-tops, in the pink cheeks that sagged slightly of plumpness, and in the utter roundness of face and gaze, but mysteriously older in the little-mother lore of crib and kneedandling ditties and in the ropy length and thickness of the two brown plaits down her back.

There was an eloquence to that waiting, laid-out table, the print of the family already gathered about it; the dynastic high chair, throne of each succeeding Kantor; an armchair drawn up before the paternal mustache-cup; the ordinary kitchen chair of Mannie Kantor, who spilled things, an oilcloth sort of bib dangling from its back; the little chair of Leon Kantor, cushioned in an old family album that raised his chin above the table. Even in cutlery the Kantor family was not lacking in variety. Surrounding a centerpiece of thick Russian lace were Russian spoons washed in washed-off gilt; forks of one, two, and three tines; steel knives with black handles; a hartshorn carving-knife. Thick-lipped china in stacks before the armchair. A round four-pound loaf of black bread waiting to be torn, and to-night,

on the festive mat of cotton lace, a cake of pinkly gleaming icing, encircled with five pink little candles.

At slightly after six Abrahm Kantor returned, leading by a resisting wrist Leon Kantor, his stemlike little legs, hit midship, as it were, by not sufficiently cut-down trousers and so narrow and birdlike of face that his eyes quite obliterated the remaining map of his features, like those of a still wet nestling. All except his ears. They poised at the sides of Leon's shaved head of black bristles, as if butterflies had just lighted there, whispering, with very spread wings, their message, and presently would fly off again. By some sort of muscular contraction he would wiggle these ears at will, and would do so for a penny or a whistle, and upon one occasion for his brother Rudolph's dead rat, so devised as to dangle from string and window before the unhappy passer-by. They were quivering now, these ears, but because the entire little face was twitching back tears and gulps of sobs.

"Abrahm—Leon—what is it?" Her hands and her forearms instantly out from the business of kneading something meaty and floury, Mrs. Kantor rushed forward, her glance quick from one to the other of them. "Abrahm, what's wrong?"

"I'll feedle him! I'll feedle him!"

The little pulling wrist still in clutch, Mr. Kantor regarded his wife, the lower half of his face, well covered with reddish bristles, undershot, his free hand and even his eyes violently lifted. To those who see in a man a perpetual kinship to that animal kingdom of which he is supreme, there was something undeniably anthropoidal about Abrahm Kantor, a certain simian width between

the eyes and long, rather agile hands with hairy backs.

"Hush it!" cried Mr. Kantor, his free hand raised in threat of descent, and cowering his small son to still more undersized proportions. "Hush it or by golly! I'll——"

"Abrahm—Abrahm—what is it?"

Then Mr. Kantor gave vent in acridity of word and feature.

"*Schlemmil!*" he cried. "*Momser! Ganef! Nebich!*" by which, in smiting mother tongue, he branded his offspring with attributes of apostate and ne'er-do-well, of idiot and thief.

"Abrahm!"

"*Schlemmil!*" repeated Mr. Kantor, swinging Leon so that he described a large semicircle that landed him into the meaty and waiting embrace of his mother. "Take him! You should be proud of such a little *momser* for a son! Take him, and here you got back his birthday dollar. A feedle! Honest—when I think on it—a feedle!"

Such a rush of outrage seemed fairly to strangle Mr. Kantor that he stood, hand still upraised, choking and inarticulate above the now frankly howling huddle of his son.

"Abrahm, you should just once touch this child! How he trembles! Leon—mamma's baby—what is it? Is this how you come back when papa takes you out to buy your birthday present? Ain't you ashamed?"

Mouth distended to a large and blackly hollow O, Leon, between terrifying spells of breath-holding, continued to howl.

"All the way to Naftel's toy-store I drag him. A

birthday present for a dollar his mother wants he should have, all right, a birthday present! I give you my word till I'm ashamed for Naftel, every toy in his shelves is pulled down. Such a cow—that shakes with his head——”

“No—no—no!” This from young Leon, beating at his mother's skirts.

Again the upraised but never quite descending hand of his father.

“By golly! I'll ‘no—no’ you!”

“Abrahm—go ‘way! Baby, what did papa do?”

Then Mr. Kantor broke into an actual tarantella of rage, his hands palms up and dancing.

“‘What did papa do?’ she ask. She's got easy asking. ‘What did papa do?’ The whole shop, I tell you. A sheep with a baa inside when you squeeze on him—games—a horn so he can holler my head off—such a knife like Izzie's with a scissors in it. ‘Leon,’ I said, ashamed for Naftel, ‘that's a fine knife like Izzie's so you can cut up with. All right, then’—when I see how he hollers—‘such a box full of soldiers to have war with.’ ‘Dollar seventy-five,’ says Naftel. ‘All right, then,’ I says, when I seen how he keeps hollering. ‘Give you a dollar fifteen for ‘em.’ I should make myself small for fifteen cents more. ‘Dollar fifteen,’ I says—anything so he should shut up with his hollering for what he seen in the window.”

“He seen something in the window he wanted, Abrahm?”

“Didn't I tell you? A feedle! A four-dollar feedle! A moosicer, so we should have another feedler in the family for some thirty-cents lessons.”



"Abrahm—you mean—Le—our Leon—wanted a violin?"

"'Wanted,' she says. I could potch him again this minute for how he wanted it! *Du*—you little bum you—*chammer—momser*—I'll feedle you!"

Across Mrs. Kantor's face, as she knelt there in the shapeless cotton-stuff uniform of poverty, through the very tenement of her body, a light had flashed up into her eyes. She drew her son closer, crushing his puny cheek up against hers, cupping his bristly little head in her by no means immaculate palms.

"He wanted a violin! It's come, Abrahm! The dream of all my life—my prayers—it's come! I knew it must be one of my children if I waited long enough—and prayed enough. A musician! He wants a violin! He cried for a violin! My baby! Why, darlink, mamma'll sell her clothes off her back to get you a violin. He's a musician, Abrahm! I should have known it the way he's fooling always around the chimes and the bells in the store!"

Then Mr. Kantor took to rocking his head between his palms.

"Oi—oi! The mother is crazier as her son. A moosician! A *fresser*, you mean. Such an eater, it's a wonder he ain't twice too big instead of twice too little for his age."

"That's a sign, Abrahm; geniuses, they all eat big. For all we know he's a genius. I swear to you, Abrahm, all the months before he was born I prayed for it. Each one before they came, I prayed it should be the one. I thought that time the way our Isidore ran after the organ-grinder he would be the one. How could I

know it was the monkey he wanted? When Isadore wouldn't take to it I prayed my next one, and then my next one, should have the talent. I've prayed for it, Abraham. If he wants a violin, please, he should have it."

"Not with my money."

"With mine! I've got enough saved, Abraham. Them three extra dollars right here inside my own waist. Just that much for that cape down on Grand Street. I wouldn't have it now, the way they say the wind blows up them——"

"I tell you the woman's crazy——"

"I feel it! I know he's got talent! I know my children so well. A—a father don't understand. I'm so next to them. It's like I can tell always everything that will happen to them—it's like a pain—somewheres here—like in back of my heart."

"A pain in the heart she gets."

"For my own children I'm always a prophet, I tell you! You think I didn't know that—that terrible night after the pogrom after we got out of Kief to across the border! You remember, Abraham, how I predicted it to you then—how our Mannie would be born too soon and—and not right from my suffering! Did it happen on the ship to America just the way I said it would? Did it happen just exactly how I predicted our Izzie would break his leg that time playing on the fire-escape? I tell you, Abraham, I get a real pain here under my heart that tells me what comes to my children. Didn't I tell you how Esther would be the first in her confirmation-class and our baby Boris would be red-headed? At only five years, our Leon all by him-

self cries for a fiddle—get it for him, Abrahm—get it for him!”

“I tell you, Sarah, I got a crazy woman for a wife! It ain’t enough we celebrate eight birthdays a year with one-dollar presents each time and copper goods every day higher. It ain’t enough that right to-morrow I got a fifty-dollar note over me from Sol Ginsberg; a four-dollar present she wants for a child that don’t even know the name of a feedle.”

“Leon, baby, stop hollering. Papa will go back and get the fiddle for you now before supper. See, mamma’s got money here in her waist——”

“Papa will go back for the feedle *not*—three dollars she’s saved for herself he can holler out of her for a feedle!”

“Abrahm, he’s screaming so he—he’ll have a fit.”

“He should have two fits.”

“Darlink——”

“I tell you the way you spoil your children it will some day come back on us.”

“It’s his birthday night, Abrahm—five years since his little head first lay on the pillow next to me.”

“All right—all right—drive me crazy because he’s got a birthday.”

“Leon baby—if you don’t stop hollering you’ll make yourself sick. Abrahm, I never saw him like this—he’s green——”

“I’ll green him. Where is that old feedle from Isadore—that seventy-five-cents one?”

“I never thought of that! You broke it that time you got mad at Isadore’s lessons. I’ll run down. Maybe it’s with the junk behind the store. I never thought

of that fiddle. Leon darlink—wait! Mamma'll run down and look. Wait, Leon, till mamma finds you a fiddle."

The raucous screams stopped then, suddenly, and on their very lustiest crest, leaving an echoing gash across silence. On willing feet of haste Mrs. Kantor wound down backward the high, ladder-like staircase that led to the brass-shop.

Meanwhile to a gnawing consciousness of dinner-hour had assembled the house of Kantor. Attuned to the intimate atmosphere of the tenement which is so constantly rent with cry of child, child-bearing, delirium, delirium tremens, Leon Kantor had howled no impression into the motley din of things. There were Isadore, already astride his chair, leaning well into center table, for first vociferous tear at the four-pound loaf; Esther, old at chores, settling an infant into the high chair, careful of tiny fingers in lowering the wooden bib.

"Papa, Izzie's eating first again."

"Put down that loaf and wait until your mother dishes up, or you'll get a potch you won't soon forget."

"Say, pop——"

"Don't 'say, pop' me! I don't want no street-bum freshness from you!"

"I mean, papa, there was an up-town swell in, and she bought one of them seventy-five-cent candle-sticks for the first price."

"*Schlemmil! Chammer!*" said Mr. Kantor, rinsing his hands at the sink. "Didn't I always tell you it's the first price, times two, when you see up-town business come in? Haven't I learned it to you, often enough a slummer must pay for her nosiness?"

There entered then, on poor, shuffling feet, Mannie Kantor, so marred in the mysterious and ceramic process of life that the brain and the soul had stayed back sooner than inhabit him. Seventeen in years, in the down upon his face and in growth unretarded by any great nervousity of system, his vacuity of face was not that of childhood, but rather as if his light eyes were peering out from some hinterland and wanting so terribly and so dumbly to communicate what they beheld to brain-cells closed against himself.

At sight of Mannie, Leon Kantor, the tears still wetly and dirtily down his cheeks, left off his black, fierce-eyed stare of waiting long enough to smile, darkly, it is true, but sweetly.

"Giddy-app!" he cried. "Giddy-app!"

And then Mannie, true to habit, would scamper and scamper.

Up out of the traplike stair-opening came the head of Mrs. Kantor, disheveled and a smudge of soot across her face, but beneath her arm, triumphant, a violin of one string and a broken back.

"See, Leon—what mamma got! A violin! A fiddle! Look! The bow, too, I found. It ain't much, baby, but it's a fiddle."

"Aw, ma—that's my old violin. Gimme. I want it. Where'd you find——"

"Hush up, Izzie! This ain't yours no more. See, Leon, what mamma brought you. A violin!"

"Now, you little *chammer*, you got a feedle, and if you ever let me hear you holler again for a feedle, by golly! if I don't——"

From his corner, Leon Kantor reached out, taking

the instrument and fitting it beneath his chin, the bow immediately feeling, surely and lightly, for string.

"Look, Abrahm, he knows how to hold it! What did I tell you? A child that never in his life seen a fiddle, except a beggar's on the street!"

Little Esther suddenly cantered down-floor, clapping her chubby hands.

"Lookie—lookie—Leon!"

The baby ceased clattering his spoon against the wooden bib. A silence seemed to shape itself.

So black and so bristly of head, his little clawlike hands hovering over the bow, Leon Kantor withdrew a note, strangely round and given up almost sobbingly from the single string. A note of warm twining quality, like a baby's finger.

"Leon—darlink!"

Fumbling for string and for notes the instrument could not yield up to him, the birdlike mouth began once more to open widely and terribly into the orificial O.

It was then Abrahm Kantor came down with a large hollow resonance of palm against that aperture, lifting his small son and depositing him plop upon the family album.

"Take that! By golly! one more whimper out of you and if I don't make you black and blue, birthday or no birthday! Dish up, Sarah, quick, or I'll give him something to cry about."

The five pink candles had been lighted, burning pointedly and with slender little smoke wisps. Regarding them owlishly, the tears dried on Leon's face, his little tongue licking up at them.

"Look how solemn he is, like he was thinking of



something a million miles away except how lucky he is he should have a pink birthday-cake. Uh—uh—uh! Don't you begin to holler again. Here, I'm putting the feedle next to you. Uh—uh—uh!"

To a meal plentifully ladled out directly from stove to table, the Kantor family drew up, dipping first into the rich black soup of the occasion. All except Mrs. Kantor.

"Esther, you dish up. I'm going somewhere. I'll be back in a minute."

"Where you going, Sarah? Won't it keep until——"

But even in the face of query, Sarah Kantor was two flights down and well through the lambent aisles of the copper-shop. Outside, she broke into run, along two blocks of the indescribable bazaar atmosphere of Grand Street, then one block to the right.

Before Naftel's show-window a jet of bright gas burned into a jibberwock land of toys. There was that in Sarah Kantor's face that was actually lyrical as, fumbling at the bosom of her dress, she entered.

To Leon Kantor, by who knows what symphonic scheme of things, life was a chromatic scale, yielding up to him, through throbbing, living nerves of sheep-gut, the sheerest semitones of man's emotions.

When he tucked his Stradivarius beneath his chin the book of life seemed suddenly translated to him in melody. Even Sarah Kantor, who still brewed for him, on a small portable stove carried from city to city and surreptitiously unpacked in hotel suites, the blackest of soups, and, despite his protestation, would incase his ears of nights in an old home-made device against their

flightiness, would oftentimes bleed inwardly at this sense of his isolation.

There was a realm into which he went alone, leaving her as detached as the merest ticket purchaser at the box-office.

At seventeen Leon Kantor had played before the crowned heads of Europe, the aching heads of American capital, and even the shaved head of a South Sea prince. There was a layout of anecdotal gifts, from the molar tooth of the South Sea prince set in a South Sea pearl to a blue-enameled snuff-box incrustured with the rearing-lion coat-of-arms of a very royal house.

At eighteen came the purchase of a king's Stradivarius for a king's ransom, and acclaimed by Sunday supplements to repose of nights in an ivory cradle.

At nineteen, under careful auspices of press agent, the ten singing digits of the son of Abrahm Kantor were insured at ten thousand dollars the finger.

At twenty he had emerged surely and safely from the perilous quicksands which have sucked down whole Lilliputian worlds of infant prodigies.

At twenty-one, when Leon Kantor played a Sunday-night concert, there was a human queue curling entirely around the square block of the opera-house, waiting its one, two, even three and four hours for the privilege of standing room only.

Usually these were Leon Kantor's own people pouring up from the lowly lands of the East Side to the white lands of Broadway, parched for music, these burning brethren of his—old men in that line, frequently carrying their own little folding camp-chairs, not against weariness of the spirit, but of the flesh; youth with

Slavic eyes and cheek-bones. These were the six-deep human phalanx which would presently slant down at him from tiers of steepest balconies and stand frankly emotional and jammed in the unreserved space behind the railing which shut them off from the three-dollar seats of the reserved.

At a very special one of these concerts, dedicated to the meager purses of just these, and held in New York's super opera-house, the Amphitheater, a great bowl of humanity, the metaphor made perfect by tiers of seats placed upon the stage, rose from orchestra to dome. A gigantic cup of a Colosseum lined in stacks and stacks of faces. From the door of his dressing-room, leaning out, Leon Kantor could see a great segment of it, buzzing down into adjustment, orchestra twitting and tuning into it.

In the bare little room, illuminated by a sheaf of roses, just arrived, Mrs. Kantor drew him back by the elbow.

"Leon, you're in a draught."

The amazing years had dealt kindly with Mrs. Kantor. Stouter, softer, apparently even taller, she was full of small new authorities that could shut out cranks, newspaper reporters, and autograph fiends. A fitted-over-corsets black taffeta and a high comb in the graying hair had done their best with her. Pride, too, had left its flush upon her cheeks, like two round spots of fever.

"Leon, it's thirty minutes till your first number. Close that door. Do you want to let your papa and his excitement in on you?"

The son of Sarah Kantor obeyed, leaning his short, rather narrow form in silhouette against the closed door.

In spite of slimly dark evening clothes worked out by an astute manager to the last detail in boyish effects, there was that about him which defied long-haired precedent. Slimly and straightly he had shot up into an unmannered, a short, even a bristly-haired young manhood, disqualifying by a close shave for the older school of hirsute virtuosity.

But his nerves did not spare him. On concert nights they seemed to emerge almost to the surface of him and shriek their exposure.

"Just feel my hands, ma. Like ice."

She dived down into her large silk what-not of a reticule.

"I've got your fleece-lined gloves here, son."

"No—no! For God's sake—not those things! No!"

He was back at the door again, opening it to a slit, peering through.

"They're bringing more seats on the stage. If they crowd me in I won't go on. I can't play if I hear them breathe. Hi—out there—no more chairs! Pa! Hancock——"

"Leon, Leon, ain't you ashamed to get so worked up? Close that door. Have you got a manager who is paid just to see to your comfort? When papa comes, I'll have him go out and tell Hancock you don't want chairs so close to you. Leon, will you mind mamma and sit down?"

"It's a bigger house than the royal concert in Madrid, ma. Why, I never saw anything like it! It's a stampede. God! this is real—this is what gets me, playing for my own! I should have given a concert like this three years ago. I'll do it every year now. I'd rather

play before them than all the crowned heads on earth. It's the biggest night of my life. They're rioting out there, ma—rioting to get in."

"Leon, Leon, won't you sit down, if mamma begs you to?"

He sat then, strumming with all ten fingers upon his knees.

"Try to get quiet, son. Count—like you always do. One—two—three——"

"Please, ma—for God's sake—please—please!"

"Look—such beautiful roses! From Sol Ginsberg, an old friend of papa's he used to buy brasses from eighteen years ago. Six years he's been away with his daughter in Munich. Such a beautiful mezzo they say, engaged already for Metropolitan next season."

"I hate it, ma, if they breathe on my neck."

"Leon darlink, did mamma promise to fix it? Have I ever let you play a concert when you wouldn't be comfortable?"

His long, slim hands suddenly prehensile and cutting a streak of upward gesture, Leon Kantor rose to his feet, face whitening.

"Do it now! Now, I tell you. I won't have them breathe on me. Do you hear me? Now! Now! Now!"

Risen also, her face soft and tremulous for him, Mrs. Kantor put out a gentle, a sedative, hand upon his sleeve.

"Son," she said, with an edge of authority even behind her smile, "don't holler at me!"

He grasped her hand with his two and, immediately quiet, lay a close string of kisses along it.

"Mamma," he said, kissing again and again into the palm, "mamma—mamma."

"I know, son; it's nerves!"

"They eat me, ma. Feel—I'm like ice! I didn't mean it; you know I didn't mean it!"

"My baby," she said, "my wonderful boy, it's like I can never get used to the wonder of having you. The greatest one of them all should be mine—a plain woman's like mine!"

He teased her, eager to conciliate and to ride down his own state of quivering.

"Now, ma—now—now—don't forget Rimsky!"

"Rimsky! A man three times your age who was playing concerts before you was born! Is that a comparison? From your clippings-books I can show Rimsky who the world considers the greatest violinist. Rimsky he rubs into me!"

"All right, then, the press-clippings, but did Elsass, the greatest manager of them all, bring me a contract for thirty concerts at two thousand a concert? Now I've got you! Now!"

She would not meet his laughter. "Elsass! Believe me, he'll come to you yet! My boy should worry if he makes fifty thousand a year more or less. Rimsky should have that honor—for so long as he can hold it. But he won't hold it long. Believe me, I don't rest easy in my bed till Elsass comes after you. Not for so big a contract like Rimsky's, but bigger—not for thirty concerts, but for fifty!"

"*Brava! Brava!* There's a woman for you. More money than she knows what to do with, and then not satisfied!"



She was still too tremulous for banter. "‘Not satisfied?’ Why, Leon, I never stop praying my thanks for you!”

"All right, then," he cried, laying his icy fingers on her cheek; "to-morrow we’ll call a *mignon*—a regular old-fashioned Allen Street prayer-party."

"Leon, you mustn’t make fun."

"Make fun of the sweetest girl in this room!"

"‘Girl!’ Ah, if I could only hold you by me this way, Leon. Always a boy—with me—your poor old mother—your only girl. That’s a fear I suffer with, Leon—to lose you to a—girl. That’s how selfish the mother of such a wonder-child like mine can get to be."

"All right! Trying to get me married off again. Nice! Fine."

"Is it any wonder I suffer, son? Twenty-one years to have kept you by me a child. A boy that never in his life was out after midnight except to catch trains. A boy that never has so much as looked at a girl and could have looked at princesses. To have kept you all these years—mine—is it any wonder, son, I never stop praying my thanks for you? You don’t believe Hancock, son, the way he keeps always teasing you that you should have a—what he calls—affair—a love-affair? Such talk is not nice, Leon—an affair!"

"Love-affair poppycock!" said Leon Kantor, lifting his mother’s face and kissing her on eyes about ready to tear. "Why, I’ve got something, ma, right here in my heart for you that——"

"Leon, be careful your shirt-front!"

"That’s so—so what you call ‘tender,’ for my best sweetheart that I—— Oh, love-affair—poppycock!"

She would not let her tears come.

"My boy—my wonder-boy!"

"There goes the overture, ma."

"Here, darlink—your glass of water."

"I can't stand it in here; I'm suffocating!"

"Got your mute in your pocket, son?"

"Yes, ma; for God's sake, yes! Yes! Don't keep asking things!"

"Ain't you ashamed, Leon, to be in such an excitement! For every concert you get worse."

"The chairs—they'll breathe on my neck."

"Leon, did mamma promise you those chairs would be moved?"

"Where's Hancock?"

"Say—I'm grateful if he stays out. It took me enough work to get this room cleared. You know your papa how he likes to drag in the whole world to show you off—always just before you play. The minute he walks in the room right away he gets everybody to trembling just from his own excitements. I dare him this time he should bring people. No dignity has that man got, the way he brings every one."

Even upon her words came a rattling of door, of door-knob, and a voice through the clamor.

"Open—quick—Sarah! Leon!"

A stiffening raced over Mrs. Kantor, so that she sat rigid on her chair-edge, lips compressed, eye darkly upon the shivering door.

"Open—Sarah!"

With a narrowing glance, Mrs. Kantor laid to her lips a forefinger of silence.

"Sarah, it's me! Quick, I say!"

Then Leon Kantor sprang up, the old prehensile gesture of curving finger shooting up.

"For God's sake, ma, let him in! I can't stand that infernal battering."

"Abrahm, go away! Leon's got to have quiet before his concert."

"Just a minute, Sarah. Open quick!"

With a spring his son was at the door, unlocking and flinging it back.

"Come in, pa."

The years had weighed heavily upon Abrahm Kantor in avoirdupois only. He was himself plus eighteen years, fifty pounds, and a new sleek pomposity that was absolutely oleaginous. It shone roundly in his face, doubling of chin, in the bulge of waistcoat, heavily gold-chained, and in eyes that behind the gold-rimmed glasses gave sparkingly forth his estate of well-being.

"Abrahm, didn't I tell you not to dare to——"

On excited balls of feet that fairly bounced him, Abrahm Kantor burst in.

"Leon—mamma—I got out here an old friend—Sol Ginsberg. You remember, mamma, from brasses——"

"Abrahm—not now——"

"Go away with your 'not now'! I want Leon should meet him. Sol, this is him—a little grown up from such a *nebich* like you remember him—*nu*? Sarah, you remember Sol Ginsberg? Say—I should ask you if you remember your right hand! Ginsberg & Esel, the firm. This is his girl, a five years' contract signed yesterday—five hundred dollars an opera for a beginner—six rôles—not bad—*nu*?"

"Abrahm, you must ask Mr. Ginsberg please to excuse Leon until after his concert——"

"Shake hands with him, Ginsberg. He's had his hand shook enough in his life, and by kings, to shake it once more with an old bouncer like you!"

Mr. Ginsberg, not unlike his colleague in rotundities, held out a short, a dimpled hand.

"It's a proud day," he said, "for me to shake the hands from mine old friend's son and the finest violinist livink to-day. My little daughter——"

"Yes, yes, Gina. Here, shake hands with him. Leon, they say a voice like a fountain. Gina Berg—eh, Ginsberg—is how you stage-named her? You hear, mamma, how fancy—Gina Berg? We go hear her, eh?"

There was about Miss Gina Berg, whose voice could soar to the tirra-lirra of a lark and then deepen to mezzo, something of the actual slimness of the poor, maligned Elsa so long buried beneath the buxomness of divas. She was like a little flower that in its crannied nook keeps dewy longest.

"How do you do, Leon Kantor?"

There was a whirl through her English of three acquired languages.

"How do *you* do?"

"We—father and I—traveled once all the way from Brussels to Dresden to hear you. It was worth it. I shall never forget how you played the 'Humoresque.' It made me laugh and cry."

"You like Brussels?"

She laid her little hand to her heart, half closing her eyes.

"I will never be so happy again as with the sweet little people of Brussels."

"I, too, love Brussels. I studied there four years with Ahrenfest."

"I know you did. My teacher, Lyndahl, in Berlin, was his brother-in-law."

"You have studied with Lyndahl?"

"He is my master."

"I—— Will I some time hear you sing?"

"I am not yet great. When I am foremost like you, yes."

"Gina—Gina Berg! that is a beautiful name to make famous."

"You see how it is done? Gins—berg. Gina Berg."

"Clev—er!"

They stood then smiling across a chasm of the diffidence of youth, she fumbling at the great fur pelt out of which her face flowered so dewily.

"I—— Well—we—we—are in the fourth box—— I guess we had better be going—— Fourth box, left."

He wanted to find words, but for consciousness of self, could not.

"It's a wonderful house out there waiting for you, Leon Kantor, and you—you're wonderful, too!"

"The—flowers—thanks!"

"My father, he sent them. Come, father—quick!"

Suddenly there was a tight tensity that seemed to crowd up the little room.

"Abrahm—quick—get Hancock. That first row of chairs—has got to be moved. There he is, in the wings. See that the piano ain't dragged down too far! Leon, got your mute in your pocket? Please, Mr. Ginsberg—

you must excuse—— Here, Leon, is your glass of water; drink it, I say. Shut that door out there, boy, so there ain't a draught in the wings. Here, Leon, your violin. Got your neckerchief? Listen how they're shouting! It's for you—Leon—darlink—— Go!"

The center of that vast human bowl which had shouted itself out, slim, boylike, and in his supreme isolation, Leon Kantor drew bow and a first thin, pellucid, and perfect note into a silence breathless to receive it.

Throughout the arduous flexuosities of the Mendelssohn E minor concerto, singing, winding from tonal to tonal climax, and out of the slow movement which is like a tourniquet twisting the heart into the spirited *allegro molto vivace*, it was as if beneath Leon Kantor's fingers the strings were living vein-cords, youth, vitality, and the very foam of exuberance racing through them.

That was the power of him. The vichy and the sparkle of youth, so that, playing, the melody poured round him like wine and went down seething and singing into the hearts of his hearers.

Later, and because these were his people and because they were dark and Slavic with his Slavic darkness, he played, as if his very blood were weeping, the "Kol Nidre," which is the prayer of his race for atonement.

And then the super-amphitheater, filled with those whose emotions lie next to the surface and whose pores have not been closed over with a water-tight veneer, burst into its cheers and its tears.

There were fifteen recalls from the wings, Abrahm Kantor standing counting them off on his fingers and trembling to receive the Stradivarius. Then, finally, and against the frantic negative pantomime of his manager,



a scherzo, played so lacyly that it swept the house in lightest laughter.

When Leon Kantor finally completed his program they were loath to let him go, crowding down the aisles upon him, applauding up, down, around him until the great disheveled house was like the roaring of a sea, and he would laugh and throw out his arm in wide-spread helplessness, and always his manager in the background gesticulating against too much of his precious product for the money, ushers already slamming up chairs, his father's arms out for the Stradivarius, and, deepest in the gloom of the wings, Sarah Kantor, in a rocker especially dragged out for her, and from the depths of the black-silk reticule, darning his socks.

"Bravo—bravo! Give us the 'Humoresque'—Chopin Nocturne—Polonaise—'Humoresque.' Bravo—bravo!"

And even as they stood, hatted and coated, importuning and pressing in upon him, and with a wisp of a smile to the fourth left box, Leon Kantor played them the "Humoresque" of Dvorák, skedaddling, plucking, quirking—that laugh on life with a tear behind it. Then suddenly, because he could escape no other way, rushed straight back for his dressing-room, bursting in upon a flood of family already there: Isadore Kantor, blue-shaved, aquiline, and already graying at the temples; his five-year-old son, Leon; a soft little pouter-pigeon of a wife, too, enormous of bust, in glittering ear-drops and a wrist watch of diamonds half buried in chubby wrist; Miss Esther Kantor, pink and pretty; Rudolph; Boris, not yet done with growing-pains.

At the door Miss Kantor met her brother, her eyes as sweetly moist as her kiss.

"Leon darling, you surpassed even yourself!"

"Quit crowding, children. Let him sit down. Here, Leon, let mamma give you a fresh collar. Look how the child's perspired. Pull down that window, Boris. Rudolph, don't let no one in. I give you my word if to-night wasn't as near as I ever came to seeing a house go crazy. Not even that time in Milan, darlink, when they broke down the doors, was it like to-night——"

"Ought to seen, ma, the row of police outside——"

"Hush up, Roody! Don't you see your brother is trying to get his breath?"

From Mrs. Isadore Kantor: "You should have seen the balconies, mother. Isadore and I went up just to see the jam."

"Six thousand dollars in the house to-night, if there was a cent," said Isadore Kantor.

"Hand me my violin, please, Esther. I must have scratched it, the way they pushed."

"No, son, you didn't. I've already rubbed it up. Sit quiet, darlink!"

He was limply white, as if the vitality had flowed out of him.

"God! wasn't it—tremendous?"

"Six thousand, if there was a cent," repeated Isadore Kantor. "More than Rimsky ever played to in his life!"

"Oh, Izzie, you make me sick, always counting—counting!"

"Your sister's right, Isadore. You got nothing to complain of if there was only six hundred in the house. A boy whose fiddle has made already enough to set you up in such a fine business, his brother Boris in such a fine college, automobiles—style—and now because

Vladimir Rimsky, three times his age, gets signed up with Elsass for a few thousand more a year, right away the family gets a long face——”

“Ma, please! Isadore didn’t mean it that way!”

“Pa’s knocking, ma! Shall I let him in?”

“Let him in, Roody. I’d like to know what good it will do to try to keep him out.”

In an actual rain of perspiration, his tie slid well under one ear, Abrahm Kantor burst in, mouthing the words before his acute state of strangulation would let them out.

“Elsass—it’s Elsass outside! He—wants—to sign—Leon—fifty concerts—coast to coast—two thousand—next season! He’s got the papers—already drawn up—the pen outside waiting——”

“Abrahm!”

“Pa!”

In the silence that followed, Isadore Kantor, a poppiness of stare and a violent redness set in, suddenly turned to his five-year-old son, sticky with lollipop, and came down soundly and with smack against the infantile, the slightly outstanding and unsuspecting ear.

“*Momser!*” he cried. “*Chammer! Lump! Ganef!* You hear that? Two thousand! Two thousand! Didn’t I tell you—didn’t I tell you to practice?”

Even as Leon Kantor put pen to this princely document, Franz Ferdinand of Serbia, the assassin’s bullet cold, lay dead in state, and let slip were the dogs of war.

In the next years, men, forty deep, were to die in piles; hayricks of fields to become human hayricks of

battle-fields; Belgium disemboweled, her very entrails dragging, to find all the civilized world her champion, and between the poppies of Flanders, crosses, thousand upon thousand of them, to mark the places where the youth of her allies fell, avenging outrage. Seas, even when calmest, were to become terrible, and men's heart-beats, a bit sluggish with the fatty degeneration of a sluggish peace, to quicken and then to throb with the rat-a-tat-tat, the rat-a-tat-tat of the most peremptory, the most reverberating call to arms in the history of the world.

In June, 1917, Leon Kantor, answering that rat-a-tat-tat, enlisted.

In November, honed by the interim of training to even a new leanness, and sailing-orders heavy and light in his heart, Lieutenant Kantor, on two days' home-leave took leave of home, which can be cruelest when it is tenderest.

Standing there in the expensive, the formal, the enormous French parlor of his up-town apartment de luxe, from not one of whose chairs would his mother's feet touch floor, a wall of living flesh, mortared in blood, was throbbing and hedging him in.

He would pace up and down the long room, heavy with the faces of those who mourn, with a laugh too ready, too facetious, in his fear for them.

"Well, well, what is this, anyway, a wake? Where's the coffin? Who's dead?"

His sister-in-law shot out her plump, watch-encrusted wrist. "Don't, Leon!" she cried. "Such talk is a sin! It might come true."

"Rosie-posy-butter-ball," he said, pausing beside her chair to pinch her deeply soft cheek. "Cry-baby-roly-poly, you can't shove me off in a wooden kimono that way."

From his place before the white-and-gold mantel, staring steadfastly at the floor tiling, Isadore Kantor turned suddenly, a bit whiter and older at the temples.

"I don't get your comedy, Leon."

"'Wooden kimono'—Leon?"

"That's the way the fellows at camp joke about coffins, ma. I didn't mean anything but fun! Great Scott! Can't any one take a joke!"

"O God! O God!" His mother fell to swaying softly, hugging herself against shivering.

"Did you sign over power of attorney to pa, Leon?"

"All fixed, Izzie."

"I'm so afraid, son, you don't take with you enough money in your pockets. You know how you lose it. If only you would let mamma sew that little bag inside your uniform with a little place for bills and a little place for the asafœtida!"

"Now, please, ma—please! If I needed more, wouldn't I take it? Wouldn't I be a pretty joke among the fellows, tied up in that smelling stuff! Orders are orders, ma. I know what to take and what not to take."

"Please, Leon, don't get mad at me, but if you will let me put in your suit-case just one little box of that salve for your finger-tips so they don't crack——"

Pausing as he paced to lay cheek to her hair, he patted her. "Three boxes, if you want. Now, how's that?"

"And you won't take it out so soon as my back is turned?"

"Cross my heart."

His touch seemed to set her trembling again, all her illy concealed emotions rushing up. "I can't stand it! Can't! Can't! Take my life—take my blood, but don't take my boy—don't take my boy——"

"Mamma, mamma, is that the way you're going to begin all over again, after your promise?"

She clung to him, heaving against the rising storm of sobs. "I can't help it—can't! Cut out my heart from me, but let me keep my boy—my wonder-boy——"

"Oughtn't she be ashamed of herself? Just listen to her, Esther! What will we do with her? Talks like she had a guarantee I wasn't coming back. Why, I wouldn't be surprised if by spring I wasn't tuning up again for a coast-to-coast tour——"

"Spring! That talk don't fool me. Without my boy, the springs in my life are over——"

"Why, ma, you talk like every soldier who goes to war was killed! There's only the smallest percentage of them die in battle——"

"‘Spring,’ he says; ‘spring’! Crossing the seas from me! To live through months with that sea between us—my boy maybe shot—my——"

"Mamma, please!"

"I can't help it, Leon; I'm not one of those fine mothers that can be so brave. Cut out my heart, but leave my boy! My wonder-boy—my child I prayed for!"

"There's other mothers, ma, with sons!"

"Yes, but not wonder-sons! A genius like you could



so easy get excused, Leon. Give it up. Genius it should be the last to be sent to—the slaughter-pen. Leon darlink—don't go!"

"Ma, ma—you don't mean what you're saying. You wouldn't want me to reason that way! You wouldn't want me to hide behind my—violin."

"I would! Would! You should wait for the draft. With my Roody and even my baby Boris enlisted, ain't it enough for one mother? Since they got to be in camp, all right, I say, let them be there, if my heart breaks for it, but not my wonder-child! You can get exemption, Leon, right away for the asking. Stay with me, Leon! Don't go away! The people at home got to be kept happy with music. That's being a soldier, too, playing their troubles away. Stay with me, Leon! Don't go leave me—don't—don't——"

He suffered her to lie, tear-drenched, back into his arms, holding her close in his compassion for her, his own face twisting.

"God! ma, this—this is awful! Please—you make us ashamed—all of us! I don't know what to say. Esther, come quiet her—for God's sake quiet her!"

From her place in that sobbing circle Esther Kantor crossed to kneel beside her mother.

"Mamma darling, you're killing yourself. What if every family went on this way? You want papa to come in and find us all crying? Is this the way you want Leon to spend his last hour with us——"

"Oh, God—God!"

"I mean his last hour until he comes back, darling. Didn't you just hear him say, darling, it may be by spring?"

“‘Spring’—‘spring’—never no more springs for me——”

“Just think, darling, how proud we should be! Our Leon, who could so easily have been excused, not even to wait for the draft.”

“It’s not too late yet—please—Leon——”

“Our Roody and Boris both in camp, too, training to serve their country. Why, mamma, we ought to be crying for happiness. As Leon says, surely the Kantor family, who fled out of Russia to escape massacre, should know how terrible slavery can be. That’s why we must help our boys, mamma, in their fight to make the world free! Right, Leon?” trying to smile with her red-rimmed eyes.

“We’ve got no fight with no one! Not a child of mine was ever raised to so much as lift a finger against no one. We’ve got no fight with no one!”

“We have got a fight with some one! With autocracy! Only this time it happens to be Hunnish autocracy. You should know it, mamma—oh, you should know it deeper down in you than any of us, the fight our family right here has got with autocracy! We should be the first to want to avenge Belgium!”

“Leon’s right, mamma darling, the way you and papa were beaten out of your country——”

“There’s not a day in your life you don’t curse it without knowing it! Every time we three boys look at your son and our brother Mannie, born an—an imbecile—because of autocracy, we know what we’re fighting for. We know. You know, too. Look at him over there, even before he was born, ruined by autocracy! Know what I’m fighting for? Why, this whole family

knows! What's music, what's art, what's life itself in a world without freedom? Every time, ma, you get to thinking we've got a fight with no one, all you have to do is look at our poor Mannie. He's the answer. He's the answer."

In a foaming sort of silence, Mannie Kantor smiled softly from his chair beneath the pink-and-gold shade of the piano-lamp. The heterogeneous sounds of women weeping had ceased. Straight in her chair, her great shelf of bust heaving, sat Rosa Kantor, suddenly dry of eye; Isadore Kantor head up. Erect now, and out from the embrace of her daughter, Sarah looked up at her son.

"What time do you leave, Leon?" she asked, actually firm of lip.

"Any minute, ma. Getting late."

This time she pulled her lips to a smile, wagging her forefinger.

"Don't let them little devils of French girls fall in love with my dude in his uniform."

Her pretense at pleasantry was almost more than he could bear.

"Hear! Hear! Our mother thinks I'm a regular lady-killer! Hear that, Esther?" pinching her cheek.

"You are, Leon—only—only, you don't know it!"

"Don't you bring down too many beaux while I'm gone, either, Miss Kantor!"

"I—won't, Leon."

*Sotto voce* to her: "Remember, Esther, while I'm gone, the royalties from the discaphone records are yours. I want you to have them for pin-money and—maybe a dowry?"

She turned from him. "Don't, Leon—don't——"

"I like him! Nice fellow, but too slow! Why, if I were in his shoes I'd have popped long ago."

She smiled with her lashes dewy.

There entered then, in a violet-scented little whirl, Miss Gina Berg, rosy with the sting of a winter's night, and, as usual, swathed in the high-napped furs.

"Gina!"

She was for greeting every one, a wafted kiss to Mrs. Kantor, and then, arms wide, a great bunch of violets in one outstretched hand, her glance straight, sure, and sparkling for Leon Kantor.

"Surprise—everybody—surprise!"

"Why, Gina—we read—we thought you were singing in Philadelphia to-night!"

"So did I, Esther darling, until a little bird whispered to me that Lieutenant Kantor was home on farewell leave."

He advanced to her down the great length of room, lowering his head over her hand, his puttee-clad legs clicking together. "You mean, Miss Gina—Gina—you didn't sing?"

"Of course I didn't! Hasn't every prima donna a larynx to hide behind?" She lifted off her fur cap, spilling curls.

"Well, I—I'll be hanged!" said Lieutenant Kantor, his eyes lakes of her reflected loveliness.

She let her hand linger in his. "Leon—you—really going? How—terrible! How—how—wonderful!"

"How wonderful—your coming!"

"I—— You think it was not nice of me—to come?"

"I think it was the nicest thing that ever happened in the world."

"All the way here in the train I kept saying, 'Crazy—crazy—running to tell Leon—Lieutenant—Kantor good-by—when you haven't even seen him three times in three years——' "

"But each—each of those three times we—we've remembered, Gina."

"But that's how I feel toward all the boys, Leon—our fighting boys—just like flying to them to kiss them each one good-by."

"Come over, Gina. You'll be a treat to our mother. I—— Well, I'll be hanged! All the way from Philadelphia!"

There was even a sparkle to talk, then, and a let-up of pressure. After a while Sarah Kantor looked up at her son, tremulous, but smiling.

"Well, son, you going to play—for your old mother before—you go? It'll be many a month—spring—maybe longer, before I hear my boy again except on the discaphone."

He shot a quick glance to his sister. "Why, I—I don't know. I—I'd love it, ma, if—if you think, Esther, I'd better."

"You don't need to be afraid of me, darlink. There's nothing can give me the strength to bear—what's before me like—like my boy's music. That's my life, his music."

"Why, yes; if mamma is sure she feels that way, play for us, Leon."

He was already at the instrument, where it lay,

swathed, atop the grand piano. "What'll it be, folks?"

"Something to make ma laugh, Leon—something light, something funny."

"'Humoresque,'" he said, with a quick glance for Miss Berg.

"'Humoresque,'" she said, smiling back at him.

He capered through, cutting and playful of bow, the melody of Dvorák's, which is as ironic as a grinning mask.

Finished, he smiled at his parent, her face still untearful.

"How's that?"

She nodded. "It's like life, son, that piece. Crying to hide its laughing and laughing to hide its crying."

"Play that new piece, Leon—the one you set to music. You know. The words by that young boy in the war who wrote such grand poetry before he was killed. The one that always makes poor Mannie laugh. Play it for him, Leon."

Her plump little unlined face innocent of fault, Mrs. Isadore Kantor ventured her request, her smile tired with tears.

"No, no—Rosa—not now! Ma wouldn't want that!"

"I do, son; I do! Even Mannie should have his share of good-by."

To Gina Berg: "They want me to play that little arrangement of mine from Allan Seegar's poem, 'I Have a Rendezvous . . .'"

"It—it's beautiful, Leon. I was to have sung it on my program to-night—only, I'm afraid you had better not—here—now——"



"Please, Leon! Nothing you play can ever make me as sad as it makes me glad. Mannie should have, too, his good-by."

"All right, then, ma—if—if you're sure you want it. Will you sing it, Gina?"

She had risen. "Why, yes, Leon."

She sang it then, quite purely, her hands clasped simply together and her glance mistily off, the beautiful, the heroic, the lyrical prophecy of a soldier-poet and a poet-soldier:

But I've a rendezvous with Death  
On some scarred slope of battered hill,  
When spring comes round again this year  
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

In the silence that followed, a sob burst out, stifled, from Esther Kantor, this time her mother holding her in arms that were strong.

"That, Leon, is the most beautiful of all your compositions. What does it mean, son, that word 'rondy-voo'?"

"Why, I—I don't exactly know. A rendezvous—it's a sort of meeting, an engagement, isn't it, Miss Gina? Gina? You're up on languages. As if I had an appointment to meet you some place—at the opera-house, for instance."

"That's it, Leon—an engagement."

"Have I an engagement with you, Gina?"

She let her lids droop. "Oh, how—how I hope you have, Leon."

"When?"

"In the spring?"

"That's it—in the spring."

Then they smiled, these two, who had never felt more than the merest butterfly wings of love brushing them, light as lashes. No word between them, only an unfinished sweetness, waiting to be linked up.

Suddenly there burst in Abrahm Kantor, in a carefully rehearsed gale of bluster.

"Quick, Leon! I got the car down-stairs. Just fifteen minutes to make the ferry. Quick! The sooner we get him over there the sooner we get him back. I'm right, mamma? Now, now! No water-works! Get your brother's suit-case, Isadore. Now, now! No non-sense! Quick—quick——"

With a deftly maneuvered round of good-bys, a grip-laden dash for the door, a throbbing moment of turning back when it seemed as though Sarah Kantor's arms could not unlock their deadlock of him, Leon Kantor was out and gone, the group of faces point-etched into the silence behind him.

The poor, mute face of Mannie, laughing softly. Rosa Kantor crying into her hands. Esther, grief-crumpled, but rich in the enormous hope of youth. The sweet Gina, to whom the waiting months had already begun their reality.

Not so Sarah Kantor. In a bedroom adjoining, its high-ceilinged vastness as cold as a cathedral to her lowness of stature, sobs dry and terrible were rumbling up from her, only to dash against lips tightly restraining them.

On her knees beside a chest of drawers, and unwrapping it from swaddling-clothes, she withdrew what at best had been a sorry sort of fiddle.

Cracked of back and solitary of string, it was as if her trembling arms, raising it above her head, would make of themselves and her swaying body the tripod of an altar.

The old twisting and prophetic pain was behind her heart. Like the painted billows of music that the old Italian masters loved to do, there wound and wreathed about her clouds of song:

But I've a rendezvous with Death  
On some scarred slope of battered hill,  
When spring comes round again this year  
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

## AS A BIRD OUT OF THE SNARE \*

By DOROTHY CANFIELD

AFTER the bargain was completed and the timber merchant had gone away, Jehiel Hawthorn walked stiffly to the pine-tree and put his horny old fist against it, looking up to its spreading top with an expression of hostile exultation in his face. The neighbor who had been called to witness the transfer of Jehiel's woodland looked at him curiously.

"That was quite a sight of money to come in without your expectin', wa'n't it?" he said, fumbling awkwardly for an opening to the question he burned to ask.

Jehiel did not answer. The two old men stood silent, looking down the valley, lying like a crevasse in a glacier between the towering white mountains. The sinuous course of the frozen river was almost black under the slaty sky of March.

"Seems kind o' providential, havin' so much money come to you just now, when your sister-in-law's jest died, and left you the first time in your life without anybody you got to stay and see to, don't it?" commented the neighbor persistently.

Jehiel made a vague sign with his head.

"I s'pose likely you'll be startin' aout to travel and see foreign parts, same's you've always planned, won't you—or maybe you cal'late you be too old now?"

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Jehiel gave no indication that he had heard. His faded old blue eyes were fixed steadily on the single crack in the rampart of mountains, through which the afternoon train was just now leaving the valley. Its whistle echoed back hollowly, as it fled away from the prison walls into the great world.

The neighbor stiffened in offended pride. "I bid you good-night, Mr. Hawthorn," he said severely, and stumped down the steep, narrow road leading to the highway in the valley.

After he had disappeared Jehiel turned to the tree and leaned his forehead against it. He was so still he seemed a part of the great pine. He stood so till the piercing chill of evening chilled him through, and when he looked again about him it was after he had lived his life all through in a brief and bitter review.

It began with the tree and it ended with the tree, and in spite of the fever of unrest in his heart it was as stationary as any rooted creature of the woods. When he was eleven and his father went away to the Civil War, he had watched him out of sight with no sorrow, only a burning envy of the wanderings that lay before the soldier. A little later, when it was decided that he should go to stay with his married sister, since she was left alone by her husband's departure to the war, he turned his back on his home with none of a child's usual reluctance, but with an eager delight in the day-long drive to the other end of the valley. That was the longest journey he had ever taken, the man of almost threescore thought, with an aching resentment against Fate.

Still, those years with his sister, filled with labor be-

yond his age as they were, had been the happiest of his life. In an almost complete isolation the two had toiled together five years, the most impressionable of his life; and all his affection centered on the silent, loving, always comprehending sister. His own father and mother grew to seem far away and alien, and his sister came to be like a part of himself. To her alone of all living souls had he spoken freely of his passion for adventuring far from home, which devoured his boy-soul. He was sixteen when her husband finally came back from the war, and he had no secrets from the young matron of twenty-six, who listened with such wide tender eyes of sympathy to his half-frantic outpourings of longing to escape from the dark, narrow valley where his fathers had lived their dark, narrow lives.

The day before he went back to his own home, now so strange to him, he was out with her, searching for some lost turkey-chicks, and found one with its foot caught in a tangle of rusty wire. The little creature had beaten itself almost to death in its struggle to get away. Kneeling in the grass, and feeling the wild palpitations of its heart under his rescuing hand, he had called to his sister, "Oh, look! Poor thing! It's 'most dead, and yet it ain't really hurt a mite, only desperate, over bein' held fast." His voice broke in a sudden wave of sympathy: "Oh, ain't it *terrible* to feel so!"

For a moment the young mother put her little son aside and looked at her brother with brooding eyes. A little later she said with apparent irrelevance, "Jehiel, as soon as you're a man grown, I'll help you to get off. You shall be a sailor, if you like, and go around the world, and bring back coral to baby and me."



A chilling premonition fell on the lad. "I don't believe it!" he said, with tears in his eyes. "I just believe I've got to stay here in this hole all my life."

His sister looked off at the tops of the trees. Finally, "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler," she quoted dreamily.

When she came to see him and their parents a few months later, she brought him a little square of crimson silk on which she had worked in tiny stitches, "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." She explained to her father and mother that it was a "text-ornament" for Jehiel to hang up over his desk; but she drew the boy aside and showed him that the silk was only lightly caught down to the foundation.

"Underneath is another text," she said, "and when your day of freedom comes I want you should promise me to cut the stitches, turn back the silk, and take the second text for your motto, so you'll remember to be properly grateful. This is the second text." She put her hands on his shoulders and said in a loud, exultant voice, "My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. The snare is broken and I am escaped."

For answer the boy pulled her eagerly to the window and pointed to a young pine-tree that stood near the house.

"Sister, that tree's just as old as I be. I've prayed to God, and I've promised myself that before it's as tall as the ridge-pole of the house, I'll be on my way."

As this scene came before his eyes, the white-haired man, leaning against the great pine, looked up at the lofty crown of green wreathing the giant's head and shook his fist at it. He hated every inch of its height,

for every inch meant an enforced renunciation that had brought him bitterness and a sense of failure.

His sister had died the year after she had given him the double text, and his father the year after that. He was left thus, the sole support of his ailing mother, who transferred to the silent, sullen boy the irresistible rule of complaining weakness with which she had governed his father. It was thought she could not live long, and the boy stood in terror of a sudden death brought on by displeasure at some act of his. In the end, however, she died quietly in her bed, an old woman of seventy-three, nursed by her daughter-in-law, the widow of Jehiel's only brother. Her place in the house was taken by Jehiel's sister-in-law, a sickly, helpless woman, alone in the world except for Jehiel, and all the neighbors congratulated him on having a housekeeper ready to his hand. He said nothing.

By that time, indeed, he had sunk into a harsh silence on all topics. He went through the exhausting routine of farming with an iron-like endurance, watched with set lips the morning and afternoon trains leave the valley, and noted the growth of the pine-tree with a burning heart. His only recreation was collecting time-tables, prospectuses of steamship companies, and what few books of travel he could afford. The only society he did not shun was that of itinerant peddlers or tramps, and occasionally a returned missionary on a lecture tour.

And always the pine-tree had grown, insolent in the pride of a creature set in the right surroundings. The imprisoned man had felt himself dwarfed by its height. But now he looked up at it again and laughed aloud. It had come late, but it had come. He was fifty-seven

years old, almost threescore, but all his life was still to be lived. He said to himself that some folks lived their lives while they did their work, but he had done all his tasks first, and now he could live. The unexpected arrival of the timber merchant and the sale of that piece of land he'd never thought would bring him a cent—was not that an evident sign that Providence was with him? He was too old and broken now to work his way about as he had planned at first, but here had come this six hundred dollars like rain from the sky. He would start as soon as he could sell his stock.

The thought reminded him of his evening chores, and he set off for the barn with a fierce jubilation that it was almost the last time he would need to milk. How far, he wondered, could he go on that money? He hurried through his work and into the house to his old desk. The faded text-ornament stood on the top shelf, but he did not see it, as he hastily tumbled out all the time-tables and sailing-lists. The habit of looking at them with the yearning bitterness of unreconciled deprivation was still so strong on him that even as he handled them eagerly, he hated them for the associations of years of misery they brought back to him.

Where should he go? He was dazed by the unlimited possibilities before him. To Boston first, as the nearest seaport. He had taken the trip in his mind so many times that he knew the exact minute when the train would cross the State line and he would be really escaped from the net which had bound him all his life. From Boston to Jamaica as the nearest place that was quite, quite different from Vermont. He had no desire to see Europe or England. Life there was too much

like what he had known. He wanted to be in a country where nothing should remind him of his past. From Jamaica where? His stiff old fingers painfully traced out a steamship line to the Isthmus and thence to Colombia. He knew nothing about that country. All the better. It would be the more foreign. Only this he knew, that nobody in that tropical country "farmed it," and that was where he wanted to go. From Colombia around the Cape to Argentina. He was aghast at the cost, but instantly decided that he would go steerage. There would be more real foreigners to be seen that way, and his money would go twice as far.

To Buenos Aires, then. He did not even attempt to pronounce this name, though its strange, inexplicable look on the page was a joy to him. From there by muleback and afoot over the Andes to Chile. He knew something about that trip. A woman who had taught in the Methodist missionary school in Santiago de Chile had taken that journey, and he had heard her give a lecture on it. He was the sexton of the church and heard all the lectures free. At Santiago de Chile (he pronounced it with a strange distortion of the school-teacher's bad accent) he would stay for a while and just live and decide what to do next. His head swam with dreams and visions, and his heart thumped heavily against his old ribs. The clock striking ten brought him back to reality. He stood up with a gesture of exultation almost fierce. "That's just the time when the train crosses the State line!" he said.

He slept hardly at all that night, waking with great starts, and imagining himself in strange foreign places, and then recognizing with a scornful familiarity the

worn old pieces of furniture in his room. He noticed at these times that it was very cold, and lifelong habit made him reflect that he would better go early to the church because it would be hard to get up steam enough to warm the building before time for service. After he had finished his morning chores and was about to start he noticed that the thermometer stood at four above zero.

That was certainly winter temperature; the snow lay like a heavy shroud on all the dead valley, but the strange, blind instinct of a man who has lived close to the earth stirred within him. He looked at the sky and the mountains and held up his bare palm. "I shouldn't be surprised if the spring break-up was near," he said. "I guess this is about the last winter day we'll get."

The church was icy cold, and he toiled in the cellar, stuffing wood into the flaming maw of the steam-heater till it was time to ring the bell. As he gave the last stroke, Deacon Bradley approached him. "Jehiel, I've got a little job of repairing I want you should do at my store," he said in the loud, slow speech of a man important in the community. "Come to the store to-morrow morning and see about it." He passed on into his pew, which was at the back of the church near a steam radiator, so that he was warm no matter what the weather was.

Jehiel Hawthorn went out and stood on the front steps in the winter sunshine and his heart swelled exultingly as he looked across at the deacon's store. "I wish I'd had time to tell him I'd do no repairs for him to-morrow, nor any time—that I'm going to travel and see the world."

The last comers disappeared in the church and the sound of singing came faintly to Jehiel's ears. Although he was the sexton he rarely was in church for the service, using his duties as an excuse for absence. He felt that it was not for him to take part in prayer and thanksgiving. As a boy he had prayed for the one thing he wanted, and what had it come to?

A penetrating cold wind swept around the corner and he turned to go inside to see about the steam-pipes. In the outer hall he noticed that the service had progressed to the responsive readings. As he opened the door of the church the minister read rapidly, "Praised be the Lord who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth."

The congregation responded in a timid inarticulate gabble, above which rose Deacon Bradley's loud voice,— "Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. The snare is broken and we are escaped." He read the responses in a slow, booming roar, at least half a sentence behind the rest, but the minister always waited for him. As he finished, he saw the sexton standing in the open door. "A little more steam, Jehiel," he added commandingly, running the words on to the end of the text.

Jehiel turned away silently, but as he stumbled through the dark, unfinished part of the cellar he thought to himself, "Well, that's the last time he'll give me an order for *one* while!"

Then the words of the text he had heard came back to his mind with a half-superstitious shock at the coincidence. He had forgotten all about that hidden part of the text-ornament. Why, now that had come true!



He ought to have cut the stitches and torn off the old text last night. He would, as soon as he went home. He wished his sister were alive to know, and suddenly, there in the dark, he wondered if perhaps she did know.

As he passed the door to the rooms of the Ladies' Auxiliary Society he noticed that it was ajar, and saw through the crack that there was a sleeping figure on the floor near the stove—a boy about sixteen. When Jehiel stepped softly in and looked at him, the likeness to his own sister struck him even before he recognized the lad as his great-nephew, the son of the child he had helped his sister to care for all those years ago.

"Why, what's Nathaniel doin' here?" he asked himself, in surprise. He had not known that the boy was even in town, for he had been on the point of leaving to enlist in the navy. Family matters could not have detained him, for he was quite alone in the world since both his father and his mother were dead and his step-mother had married again. Under his great-uncle's gaze the lad opened his eyes with a start and sat up confused. "What's the matter with you, Nat?" asked the older man not ungently. He was thinking that probably he had looked like that at sixteen. The boy stared at him a moment, and then, leaning his head on a chair, he began to cry. Sitting thus, crouched together, he looked like a child.

"Why, Natty, what's the trouble?" asked his uncle, alarmed.

"I came off here because I couldn't hold in at home any longer," answered the other between sobs. "You see I can't go away. Her husband treats her so bad

she can't stay with him. I don't blame her, she says she just *can't*! So she's come back and she ain't well, and she's goin' to have a baby, and I've got to stay and support her. Mr. Bradley's offered me a place in his store and I've got to give up goin' to the navy." He suddenly realized the unmanliness of his attitude, rose to his feet, closing his lips tightly, and faced the older man with a resolute expression of despair in his young eyes.

"Uncle Jehiel, it does seem to me I *can't* have it so! All my life I've looked forward to bein' a sailor and goin' around the world, and all. I just hate the valley and the mountains! But I guess I got to stay. She's only my stepmother, I know, but she was always awful good to me, and she hasn't got anybody else to look after her." His voice broke, and he put his arm up in a crook over his face. "But it's awful hard! I feel like a bird that's got caught in a snare."

His uncle had grown very pale during this speech, and at the last words he recoiled with an exclamation of horror. There was a silence in which he looked at his nephew with the wide eyes of a man who sees a specter. Then he turned away into the furnace-room, and picking up his lunch-box brought it back. "Here, you," he said roughly, "part of what's troublin' you is that you ain't had any breakfast. You eat this and you'll feel better. I'll be back in a minute."

He went away blindly into the darkest part of the cellar. It was very black there, but his eyes stared wide before him. It was very cold, but drops of sweat stood on his forehead as if he were in the hay-field,

He was alone, but his lips moved from time to time, and once he called out in some loud, stifled exclamation which resounded hollowly in the vault-like place. He was there a long time.

When he went back into the furnace cellar, he found Nathaniel sitting before the fire. The food and warmth had brought a little color into his pale face, but it was still set in a mask of tragic desolation.

As his uncle came in, he exclaimed, "Why, Uncle Jehiel, you look awful bad. Are you sick?"

"Yes, I be," said the other harshly, "but 'tain't nothin'. It'll pass after a while. Nathaniel, I've thought of a way you can manage. You know your uncle's wife died this last week and that leaves me without any housekeeper. What if your stepmother sh'd come and take care of me and I'll take care of her. I've just sold a piece of timber land I never thought to get a cent out of, and that'll ease things up so we can hire help if she ain't strong enough to do the work."

Nathaniel's face flushed in a relief which died quickly down to a somber hopelessness. He faced his uncle doggedly. "Not *much*, Uncle Jehiel!" he said heavily. "I ain't a-goin' to hear to such a thing. I know all about your wantin' to get away from the valley—you take that money and go yourself and I'll——"

Hopelessness and resolution were alike struck out of his face by the fury of benevolence with which the old man cut him short. "Don't you dare to speak a word against it, boy!" cried Jehiel in a labored anguish. "Good Lord! I'm only doin' it for you because I *have* to! I've been through what you're layin' out for your-

self an' stood it, somehow, an' now I'm 'most done with it all. But 'twould be like beginnin' it all again to see you startin' in."

The boy tried to speak, but he raised his voice. "No, I couldn't stand it all over again. 'Twould cut in to the places where I've got calloused." Seeing through the other's stupor the beginnings of an irresolute opposition, he flung himself upon him in a strange and incredible appeal, crying out, "Oh, you must! You *got* to go!" commanding and imploring in the same incoherent sentence, struggling for speech, and then hanging on Nathaniel's answer in a sudden wild silence. It was as though his next breath depended on the boy's decision.

It was very still in the twilight where they stood. The faint murmur of a prayer came down from above, and while it lasted both were as though held motionless by its mesmeric monotony. Then, at the boom of the organ, the lad's last shred of self-control vanished. He burst again into muffled weary sobs, the light from the furnace glistening redly on his streaming cheeks. "It ain't right, Uncle Jehiel. I feel as though I was murderin' somethin'! But I can't help it. I'll go, I'll do as you say, but——"

His uncle's agitation went out like a wind-blown flame. He, too, drooped in an utter fatigue. "Never mind, Natty," he said tremulously, "it'll all come out right somehow. Just you do as Uncle Jehiel says."

A trampling upstairs told him that the service was over. "You run home now and tell her I'll be over this afternoon to fix things up."

He hurried up the stairs to open the front doors, but

Deacon Bradley was before him. "You're late, Jehiel," he said severely, "and the church was cold."

"I know, Deacon," said the sexton humbly, "but it won't happen again. And I'll be around the first thing in the morning to do that job for you." His voice sounded dull and lifeless.

"What's the matter?" asked the deacon. "Be you sick?"

"Yes, I be, but 'tain't nothin'. 'Twill pass after a while."

That evening, as he walked home after service, he told himself that he had never known so long a day. It seemed longer than all the rest of his life. Indeed he felt that some strange and racking change had come upon him since the morning, as though he were not the same person, as though he had been away on a long journey, and saw all things with changed eyes. "I feel as though I'd died," he thought with surprise, "and was dead and buried."

This brought back to his mind the only bitter word he had spoken throughout the endless day. Nathaniel had said, as an excuse for his haste (Jehiel insisted on his leaving that night), "You see, mother, it's really a service to Uncle Jehiel, since he's got nobody to keep house for him." He had added, in the transparent self-justification of selfish youth, "And I'll pay it back to him every cent." At this Jehiel had said shortly, "By the time you can pay it back what I'll need most will be a tombstone. Git a big one so's to keep me down there quiet."

But now, walking home under the frosty stars, he felt very quiet already, as though he needed no weight to lie

heavy on his restless heart. It did not seem restless now, but very still, as though it too were dead. He noticed that the air was milder, and as he crossed the bridge below his house he stopped and listened. Yes, the fine ear of his experience caught a faint grinding sound. By to-morrow the river would begin to break up. It was the end of winter. He surprised himself by his pleasure in thinking of the spring.

Before he went into the house after his evening chores were done, he stopped for a moment and looked back at the cleft in the mountain wall through which the railroad left the valley. He had been looking longingly toward that door of escape all his life, and now he said good-by to it. "Ah, well, 'twan't to be," he said with an accent of weary finality; but then, suddenly out of the chill which oppressed his heart there sprang a last searing blast of astonished anguish. It was as if he realized for the first time all that had befallen him since the morning. He was racked by a horrified desolation that made his sturdy old body stagger as if under an unexpected blow. As he reeled he flung his arm about the pine-tree and so stood for a time, shaking in a paroxysm which left him breathless when it passed.

For it passed as suddenly as it came. He lifted his head and looked again at the great cleft in the mountains, with new eyes. Somehow, insensibly, his heart had been emptied of its fiery draught by more than mere exhaustion. The old bitter pain was gone, but there was no mere void in its place. He felt the sweet, weak light-headedness of a man in his first lucid period after a fever, tears stinging his eyelids in confused thanksgiving for an unrecognized respite from pain.



He looked up at the lofty crown of the pine-tree, through which shone one or two of the brightest stars, and felt a new comradeship with it. It was a great tree, he thought, and they had grown up together. He laid his hardened palm on it, and fancied that he caught a throb of the silent vitality under the bark. How many kinds of life there were! Under its white shroud, how all the valley lived. The tree stretching up its head to the stars, the river preparing to throw off the icy armor which compressed its heart—they were all awakening in their own way. The river had been restless, like himself, the tree had been tranquil, but they passed together through the resurrection into quiet life.

When he went into the house, he found that he was almost fainting with fatigue. He sat down by the desk, and his head fell forward on the pile of pamphlets he had left there. For the first time in his life he thought of them without a sore heart. "I suppose Natty'll go to every one of them places," he murmured as he dropped to sleep.

He dreamed strange, troubled dreams that melted away before he could seize on them, and finally he thought his sister stood before him and called. The impression was so vivid that he started up, staring at the empty room. For an instant he still thought he heard a voice, and then he knew it was the old clock striking the hour. It was ten o'clock.

"Natty's just a-crossin' the State line," he said aloud.

The text-ornament caught his eye. Still half asleep, with his sister's long-forgotten voice ringing in his ears, he remembered vaguely that he had meant to bring the second text to light. For a moment he hesitated, and

then, "Well, it's come true for Natty, anyhow," he thought.

And clumsily using his heavy jackknife, he began to cut the tiny stitches which had so long hidden from his eyes the joyous exultation of the escaped prisoner.

## TWO FOR A CENT \*

By F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

WHEN the rain was over the sky became yellow in the west and the air was cool. Close to the street, which was of red dirt and lined with cheap bungalows dating from 1910, a little boy was riding a big bicycle along the sidewalk. His plan afforded a monotonous fascination. He rode each time for about a hundred yards, dismounted, turned the bicycle around so that it adjoined a stone step and getting on again, not without toil or heat, retraced his course. At one end this was bounded by a colored girl of fourteen holding an anemic baby, and at the other, by a scarred, ill-nourished kitten, squatting dismally on the curb. These four were the only souls in sight.

The little boy had accomplished an indefinite number of trips, oblivious alike to the melancholy advances of the kitten at one end and to the admiring vacuousness of the colored girl at the other, when he swerved dangerously to avoid a man who had turned the corner into the street, and recovered his balance only after a moment of exaggerated panic.

But if the incident was a matter of gravity to the boy, it attracted scarcely an instant's notice from the new-

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comer, who turned suddenly from the sidewalk and stared with obvious and peculiar interest at the house before which he was standing. It was the oldest house in the street, built with clapboards and a shingled roof. It was a *house*—in the barest sense of the word: the sort of house that a child would draw on a blackboard. It was of a period, but of no design, and its exterior had obviously been made only as a decent cloak for what was within. It antedated the stucco bungalows by about thirty years and except for the bungalows, which were reproducing their species with prodigious avidity, as though by some monstrous affiliation with the guinea-pig, it was the most common type of house in the country. For thirty years such dwellings had satisfied the canons of the middle class; they had satisfied its financial canons by being cheap, they had satisfied its æsthetic canons by being hideous. It was a house built by a race whose more energetic complement hoped either to move up or move on, and it was the more remarkable that its instability had survived so many summers and retained its pristine hideousness and discomfort so obviously unimpaired.

The man was about as old as the house, that is to say, about forty-five. But unlike the house, he was neither hideous nor cheap. His clothes were too good to have been made outside of a metropolis—moreover, they were so good that it was impossible to tell in which metropolis they were made. His name was Abercrombie and the most important event of his life had taken place in the house before which he was standing. He had been born there.

It was one of the last places in the world where he

should have been born. He had thought so within a very few years after the event and he thought so now—an ugly home in a third-rate southern town where his father had owned a partnership in a grocery store. Since then Abercrombie had played golf with the President of the United States and sat between two duchesses at dinner. He had been bored with the President, he had been bored and not a little embarrassed with the duchesses—nevertheless, the two incidents had pleased him and still sat softly upon his naïve vanity. It delighted him that he had gone far.

He had looked fixedly at the house for several minutes before he perceived that no one lived there. Where the shutters were not closed it was because there were no shutters to be closed, and in these vacancies, blind, vacuous expanses of gray window looked unseeingly down at him. The grass had grown wantonly long in the yard and faint green mustaches were sprouting facetiously in the wide cracks of the walk. But it was evident that the property had been recently occupied, for upon the porch lay half a dozen newspapers rolled into cylinders for quick delivery and as yet turned only to a faint, resentful yellow.

They were not nearly so yellow as the sky when Abercrombie walked up on the porch and sat down upon an immemorial bench, for the sky was every shade of yellow, the color of tan, the color of gold, the color of peaches. Across the street and beyond a vacant lot rose a rampart of vivid red brick houses and it seemed to Abercrombie that the picture they rounded out was beautiful—the warm, earthy brick and the sky fresh after the rain, changing and gray as a dream. All his

life when he had wanted to rest his mind he had called up into it the image those two things had made for him when the air was clear just at this hour. So Abercrombie sat there thinking about his young days.

Ten minutes later another man turned the corner of the street, a different sort of man, both in the texture of his clothes and the texture of his soul. He was forty-six years old and he was a shabby drudge, married to a woman, who, as a girl, had known better days. This latter fact, in the republic, may be set down in the red italics of misery.

His name was Hemmick—Henry W. or George D. or John F.—the stock that produced him had had little imagination left to waste either upon his name or his design. He was a clerk in a factory which made ice for the long southern summer. He was responsible to the man who owned the patent for canning ice, who in his turn was responsible only to God. Never in his life had Henry W. Hemmick discovered a new way to advertise canned ice nor had it transpired that by taking a diligent correspondence course in ice canning he had secretly been preparing himself for a partnership. Never had he rushed home to his wife, crying: "You can have that servant now, Nell, I have been made general superintendent." You will have to take him as you take Abercrombie, for what he is and will always be. This is a story of the dead years.

When the second man reached the house he turned in and began to mount the tipsy steps, noticed Abercrombie, the stranger, with a tired surprise, and nodded to him.

"Good evening," he said.



Abercrombie voiced his agreement with the sentiment.

"Cool"—the newcomer covered his forefinger with his handkerchief and sent the swathed digit on a complete circuit of his collar band. "Have you rented this?" he asked.

"No, indeed, I'm just—resting. Sorry if I've intruded—I saw the house was vacant——"

"Oh, you're not intruding!" said Hemmick hastily. "I don't reckon anybody *could* intrude in this old barn. I got out two months ago. They're not ever goin' to rent it any more. I got a little girl about this high," he held his hand parallel to the ground and at an indeterminate distance, "and she's mighty fond of an old doll that got left here when we moved. Began hollerin' for me to come over and look it up."

"You used to live here?" inquired Abercrombie with interest.

"Lived here eighteen years. Came here 'n I was married, raised four children in this house. Yes, *sir*. I know this old fellow." He struck the door-post with the flat of his hand. "I know every leak in her roof and every loose board in her old floor."

Abercrombie had been good to look at for so many years that he knew if he kept a certain attentive expression on his face his companion would continue to talk—indefinitely.

"You from up north?" inquired Hemmick politely, choosing with habituated precision the one spot where the anemic wooden railing would support his weight. "I thought so," he resumed at Abercrombie's nod. "Don't take long to tell a Yankee."

"I'm from New York."

"So?" The man shook his head with inappropriate gravity. "Never have got up there, myself. Started to go a couple of times, before I was married, but never did get to go."

He made a second excursion with his finger and handkerchief and then, as though having come suddenly to a cordial decision, he replaced the handkerchief in one of his bumpy pockets and extended the hand toward his companion.

"My name's Hemmick."

"Glad to know you." Abercrombie took the hand without rising. "Abercrombie's mine."

"I'm mighty glad to know you, Mr. Abercrombie."

Then for a moment they both hesitated, their two faces assumed oddly similar expressions, their eyebrows drew together, their eyes looked far away. Each was straining to force into activity some minute cell long sealed and forgotten in his brain. Each made a little noise in his throat, looked away, looked back, laughed. Abercrombie spoke first.

"We've met."

"I know," agreed Hemmick, "but whereabouts? That's what's got me. You from New York, you say?"

"Yes, but I was born and raised in this town. Lived in this house till I left here when I was about seventeen. As a matter of fact, I remember you—you were a couple of years older."

Again Hemmick considered.

"Well," he said vaguely, "I sort of remember, too. I *begin* to remember—I got your name all right and I guess maybe it was your daddy had this house before I rented it. But all I can recollect about you is that

there was a boy named Abercrombie and he went away."

In a few moments they were talking easily. It amused them both to have come from the same house—amused Abercrombie especially, for he was a vain man, rather absorbed that evening in his own early poverty. Though he was not given to immature impulses he found it necessary somehow to make it clear in a few sentences that five years after he had gone away from the house and the town he had been able to send for his father and mother to join him in New York.

Hemmick listened with that exaggerated attention which men who have not prospered generally render to men who have. He would have continued to listen had Abercrombie become more expansive, for he was beginning faintly to associate him with an Abercrombie who had figured in the newspapers for several years at the head of shipping boards and financial committees. But Abercrombie, after a moment, made the conversation less personal.

"I didn't realize you had so much heat here, I guess I've forgotten a lot in twenty-five years."

"Why, this is a *cool* day," boasted Hemmick, "this is *cool*. I was just sort of overheated from walking when I came up."

"It's too hot," insisted Abercrombie with a restless movement; then he added abruptly, "I don't like it here. It means nothing to me—nothing—I've wondered if it did, you know, that's why I came down. And I've decided."

"You see," he continued hesitantly, "up to recently the North was still full of professional Southerners, some real, some by sentiment, but all given to flowery mono-

logues on the beauty of their old family plantations and all jumping up and howling when the band played 'Dixie.' You know what I mean." He turned to Hemmick. "It got to be a sort of a national joke. Oh, I was in the game, too, I suppose, I used to stand up and perspire and cheer, and I've given young men positions for no particular reason except that they claimed to come from South Carolina or Virginia——" Again he broke off and became suddenly abrupt. "But I'm through, I've been here six hours and I'm through!"

"Too hot for you?" inquired Hemmick, with mild surprise.

"Yes! I've felt the heat and I've seen the men—those two or three dozen loafers standing in front of the stores on Jackson Street—in thatched straw hats." Then he added, with a touch of humor, "They're what my son calls 'slash-pocket, belted-back boys.' Do you know the ones I mean?"

"Jelly-beans," Hemmick nodded gravely. "We call 'em Jelly-beans. No-account lot of boys all right. They got signs up in front of most of the stores asking 'em not to stand there."

"They ought to!" asserted Abercrombie, with a touch of irascibility. "That's my picture of the South, now, you know—a skinny, dark-haired young man with a gun on his hip and a stomach full of corn liquor or Dope Dola, leaning up against a drug store waiting for the next lynching."

Hemmick objected, though with apology in his voice.

"You got to remember, Mr. Abercrombie, that we haven't had the money down here since the war——"

Abercrombie waved this impatiently aside.

"Oh, I've heard all that," he said, "and I'm tired of it. And I've heard the South lambasted till I'm tired of that, too. It's not taking France and Germany fifty years to get on their feet, and their war made your war look like a little fracas up an alley. And it's not your fault and it's not anybody's fault. It's just that this is too damn hot to be a white man's country and it always will be. I'd like to see 'em pack two or three of these states full of darkies and drop 'em out of the Union."

Hemmick nodded, thoughtfully, though without thought. He had never thought; for over twenty years he had seldom ever held opinions, save the opinions of the local press or of some majority made articulate through passion. There was a certain luxury in thinking that he had never been able to afford. When cases were set before him he either accepted them outright, if they were comprehensible to him, or rejected them if they required a modicum of concentration. Yet he was not a stupid man. He was poor and busy and tired and there were no ideas at large in his community, even had he been capable of grasping them. The idea that he did not think would have been equally incomprehensible to him. He was a closed book, half full of badly printed, uncorrelated trash.

Just now, his reaction to Abercrombie's assertion was exceedingly simple. Since the remarks proceeded from a man who was a Southerner by birth, who was successful—moreover, who was confident and decisive and persuasive and suave—he was inclined to accept them without suspicion or resentment.

He took one of Abercrombie's cigars and pulling on it, still with a stern imitation of profundity upon his

tired face, watched the color glide out of the sky and the gray veils come down. The little boy and his bicycle, the baby, the nursemaid, the forlorn kitten, all had departed. In the stucco bungalows pianos gave out hot, weary notes that inspired the crickets to competitive sound, and squeaky graphophones filled in the intervals with patches of whining ragtime until the impression was created that each living room in the street opened directly out into the darkness.

"What *I* want to find out," Abercrombie was saying with a frown, "is why I didn't have sense enough to *know* that this was a worthless town. It was entirely an accident that I left here, an utterly blind chance, and as it happened, the very train that took me away was full of luck for me. The man I sat beside gave me my start in life." His tone became resentful. "But I thought this was all right. I'd have stayed except that I'd gotten into a scrape down at the high school—I got expelled and my daddy told me he didn't want me at home any more. Why didn't I know the place wasn't any good? Why I didn't *see*?"

"Well, you'd probably never known anything better?" suggested Hemmick mildly.

"That wasn't any excuse," insisted Abercrombie. "If I'd been any good I'd have known. As a matter of fact—as—a—matter—of—fact," he repeated slowly, "I think that at heart I was the sort of boy who'd have lived and died here happily and never known there was anything better." He turned to Hemmick with a look almost of distress. "It worries me to think that my—that what's happened to me can be ascribed to chance. But that's the sort of boy I think I was. I didn't start



off with the Dick Whittington idea—I started off by accident.”

After this confession he stared out into the twilight with a dejected expression that Hemmick could not understand. It was impossible for the latter to share any sense of the importance of such a distinction—in fact, from a man of Abercrombie’s position it struck him as unnecessarily trivial. Still, he felt that some manifestation of acquiescence was only polite.

“Well,” he offered, “it’s just that some boys get the bee to get up and go North and some boys don’t. I happened to have the bee to go North. But I didn’t. That’s the difference between you and me.”

Abercrombie turned to him intently.

“You did?” he asked, with unexpected interest. “You wanted to get out?”

“At one time.” At Abercrombie’s eagerness Hemmick began to attach a new importance to the subject. “At one time,” he repeated, as though the singleness of the occasion was a thing he had often mused upon.

“How old were you?”

“Oh—”bout twenty.”

“What put it into your head?”

“Well, let me see—” Hemmick considered. “I don’t know whether I remember sure enough, but it seems to me that when I was down to the University—I was there two years—one of the professors told me that a smart boy ought to go North. He said business wasn’t going to amount to much down here for the next fifty years. And I guessed he was right. My father died about then, so I got a job as runner in the bank here, and I didn’t have much interest in anything except

saving up enough money to go North. I was bound I'd go."

"Why didn't you? Why didn't you?" insisted Abercrombie in an aggrieved tone.

"Well," Hemmick hesitated, "well, I right near did but—things didn't work out and I didn't get to go. It was a funny sort of business. It all started about the smallest thing you can think of. It all started about a penny."

"A penny?"

"That's what did it—one little penny. That's why I didn't go 'way from here and all, like I intended."

"Tell me about it, man," exclaimed his companion. He looked at his watch impatiently. "I'd like to hear the story."

Hemmick sat for a moment, distorting his mouth around the cigar.

"Well, to begin with," he said at length, "I'm going to ask you if you remember a thing that happened here about twenty-five years ago. A fellow named Hoyt, the cashier of the Cotton National Bank, disappeared one night with about thirty thousand dollars in cash. Say, man, they didn't talk about anything else down here at the time. The whole town was shaken up about it, and I reckon you can imagine the disturbance it caused down at all the banks and especially at the Cotton National."

"I remember."

"Well, they caught him, and they got most of the money back, and by and by the excitement died down, except in the bank where the thing had happened. Down there it seemed as if they'd never get used to it. Mr. Deems, the first vice-president, who'd always been

pretty kind and decent, got to be a changed man. He was suspicious of the clerks, the tellers, the janitor, the watchman, most of the officers, and yes, by golly, I guess he got so he kept an eye on the president himself.

"I don't mean he was just watchful—he was downright hipped on the subject. He'd come up and ask you funny questions when you were going about your business. He'd walk into the teller's cage on tip-toe and watch him without saying anything. If there was any mistake of any kind in the bookkeeping, he'd not only fire a clerk or so, but he'd raise such a riot that he made you want to push him into a vault and slam the door on him.

"He was just about running the bank then, and he'd affected the other officers, and—oh, you can imagine the havoc a thing like that could work on any sort of an organization. Everybody was so nervous that they made mistakes whether they were careful or not. Clerks were staying downtown until eleven at night trying to account for a lost nickel. It was a thin year, anyhow, and everything financial was pretty rickety, so one thing worked on another until the crowd of us were as near craziness as anybody can be and carry on the banking business at all.

"I was a runner—and all through the heat of one God-forsaken summer I ran. I ran and I got mighty little money for it, and that was the time I hated that bank and this town, and all I wanted was to get out and go North. I was getting ten dollars a week, and I'd decided that when I'd saved fifty out of it I was going down to the depot and buy me a ticket to Cincinnati. I had an uncle in the banking business there,

and he said he'd give me an opportunity with him. But he never offered to pay my way, and I guess he thought if I was worth having I'd manage to get up there by myself. Well, maybe I wasn't worth having because, anyhow, I never did.

"One morning, on the hottest day of the hottest July I ever knew—and you know what that means down here—I left the bank to call on a man named Harlan and collect some money that'd come due on a note. Harlan had the cash waiting for me all right, and when I counted it I found it amounted to three hundred dollars and eighty-six cents, the change being in brand new coin that Harlan had drawn from another bank that morning. I put the three one-hundred-dollar bills in my wallet and the change in my vest pocket, signed a receipt and left. I was going straight back to the bank.

"Outside the heat was terrible. It was enough to make you dizzy, and I hadn't been feeling right for a couple of days, so, while I waited in the shade for a street-car, I was congratulating myself that in a month or so I'd be out of this and up where it was some cooler. And then, as I stood there, it occurred to me all of a sudden that outside of the money which I'd just collected, which, of course, I couldn't touch, I didn't have a cent in my pocket. I'd have to walk back to the bank, and it was about fifteen blocks away. You see, on the night before, I'd found that my change came to just a dollar, and I'd traded it for a bill at the corner store and added it to the roll in the bottom of my trunk. So there was no help for it—I took off my coat and I stuck my handkerchief into my collar and struck off through the suffocating heat for the bank.

"Fifteen blocks—you can imagine what that was like, and I was sick when I started. From away up by Juniper Street—you remember where that is; the new Mieger Hospital's there now—all the way down to Jackson. After about six blocks I began to stop and rest whenever I found a patch of shade wide enough to hold me, and as I got pretty near I could just keep going by thinking of the big glass of iced tea my mother'd have waiting beside my plate at lunch. But after that I began getting too sick to even want the iced tea—I wanted to get rid of that money and then lie down and die.

"When I was still about two blocks away from the bank I put my hand into my watch pocket and pulled out that change; was sort of jingling it in my hand; making myself believe that I was so close that it was convenient to have it ready. I happened to glance into my hand, and all of a sudden I stopped up short and reached down quick into my watch pocket. The pocket was empty. There was a little hole in the bottom, and my hand held only a half-dollar, a quarter and a dime. I had lost one cent.

"Well, sir, I can't tell you, I can't express to you the feeling of discouragement that this gave me. One penny, mind you—but think; just the week before a runner had lost his job because he was a little bit shy twice. It was only carelessness; but there you were! They were all in a panic that they might get fired themselves, and the best thing to do was to fire some one else—first.

"So you can see that it was up to me to appear with that penny.

"Where I got the energy to care as much about it as I did is more than I can understand. I was sick and hot and weak as a kitten, but it never occurred to me that I could do anything except find or replace that penny, and immediately I began casting about for a way to do it. I looked into a couple of stores, hoping I'd see some one I knew, but while there were a few fellows loafing in front, just as you saw them to-day, there wasn't one that I felt like going up to and saying: 'Here! You got a penny?' I thought of a couple of offices where I could have gotten it without much trouble, but they were some distance off, and besides being pretty dizzy, I hated to go out of my route when I was carrying bank money, because it looked kind of strange.

"So what should I do but commence walking back along the street toward the Union Depot where I last remembered having the penny. It was a brand new penny, and I thought maybe I'd see it shining where it dropped. So I kept walking, looking pretty carefully at the sidewalk and thinking what I'd better do. I laughed a little, because I felt sort of silly for worrying about a penny, but I didn't enjoy laughing, and it really didn't seem silly to me at all.

"Well, by and by I got back to the Union Depot without having either seen the old penny or having thought what was the best way to get another. I hated to go all the way home, 'cause we lived a long distance out; but what else was I to do? So I found a piece of shade close to the depot, and stood there considering, thinking first one thing and then another, and not getting anywhere at all. One little penny, just *one*—something



almost any man in sight would have given me; something even the nigger baggage-smashers were jingling around in their pockets. . . . I must have stood there about five minutes. I remember there was a line of about a dozen men in front of an army recruiting station they'd just opened, and a couple of them began to yell: 'Join the Army!' at me. That woke me up, and I moved on back toward the bank, getting worried now, getting mixed up and sicker and sicker and knowing a million ways to find a penny and not one that seemed convenient or right. I was exaggerating the importance of losing it, and I was exaggerating the difficulty of finding another, but you just have to believe that it seemed about as important to me just then as though it were a hundred dollars.

"Then I saw a couple of men talking in front of Moody's soda place, and recognized one of them—Mr. Burling—who'd been a friend of my father's. That was relief, I can tell you. Before I knew it I was chattering to him so quick that he couldn't follow what I was getting at.

" 'Now,' he said, 'you know I'm a little deaf and can't understand when you talk that fast! What is it you want, Henry? Tell me from the beginning.'

" 'Have you got any change with you?' I asked him just as loud as I dared. 'I just want—' Then I stopped short; a man a few feet away had turned around and was looking at us. It was Mr. Deems, the first vice-president of the Cotton National Bank."

Hemmick paused, and it was still light enough for Abercrombie to see that he was shaking his head to and fro in a puzzled way. When he spoke his voice held a

quality of pained surprise, a quality that it might have carried over twenty years.

"I never *could* understand what it was that came over me then. I must have been sort of crazy with the heat—that's all I can decide. Instead of just saying 'Howdy' to Mr. Deems, in a natural way, and telling Mr. Burling I wanted to borrow a nickel for tobacco, because I'd left my purse at home, I turned away quick as a flash and began walking up the street at a great rate, feeling like a criminal who had come near being caught.

"Before I'd gone a block I was sorry. I could almost hear the conversation that must've been taking place between those two men:

"'What do you reckon's the matter with that young man?'" Mr. Burling would say, without meaning any harm. 'Came up to me all excited and wanted to know if I had any money, and then he saw you and rushed away like he was crazy.'

"And I could almost see Mr. Deems' big eyes get narrow with suspicion and watch him twist up his trousers and come strolling along after me. I was in a real panic now, and no mistake. Suddenly I saw a one-horse surrey going by, and recognized Bill Kennedy, a friend of mine, driving it. I yelled at him, but he didn't hear me. Then I yelled again, but he didn't pay any attention, so I started after him at a run, swaying from side to side, I guess, like I was drunk, and calling his name every few minutes. He looked around once, but he didn't see me; he kept right on going and turned out of sight at the next corner. I stopped then, because I was too weak to go any farther. I was just about to sit down on the curb and

rest when I looked around, and the first thing I saw was Mr. Deems walking after me as fast as he could come. There wasn't any of my imagination about it this time—the look in his eyes showed he wanted to know what was the matter with *me!*

“Well, that’s about all I can remember clearly until about twenty minutes later, when I was at home trying to unlock my trunk with fingers that were trembling like a tuning fork. Before I could get it open, Mr. Deems and a policeman came in. I began talking all at once about not being a thief and trying to tell them what had happened, but I guess I was sort of hysterical, and the more I said the worse matters were. When I managed to get the story out it seemed sort of crazy, even to me—and it was true—it was true, true as I’ve told you—every word!—that one penny that I lost somewhere down by the station—” Hemmick broke off and began laughing grotesquely—as though the excitement that had come over him as he finished his tale was a weakness of which he was ashamed. When he resumed it was with an affectation of nonchalance.

“I’m not going into the details of what happened, because nothing much did—at least, not on the scale you judge events by up North. It cost me my job, and I changed a good name for a bad one. Somebody tattled and somebody lied, and the impression got around that I’d lost a lot of the bank’s money and had been tryin’ to cover it up.

“I had an awful time getting a job after that. Finally I got a statement out of the bank that contradicted the wildest of the stories that had started, but the people who were still interested said it was just because the

bank didn't want any fuss or scandal—and the rest had forgotten: that is, they'd forgotten what had happened, but they remembered that somehow I just wasn't a young fellow to be trusted——”

Hemmick paused and laughed again, still without enjoyment, but bitterly, uncomprehendingly, and with a profound helplessness.

“So, you see, that's why I didn't go to Cincinnati,” he said slowly; “my mother was alive then, and this was a pretty bad blow to her. She had an idea—one of those old-fashioned Southern ideas that stick in people's heads down here—that somehow I ought to stay here in town and prove myself honest. She had it on her mind, and she wouldn't hear of my going. She said that the day I went 'd be the day she'd die. So I sort of had to stay till I'd got back my—my reputation.”

“How long did that take?” asked Abercrombie quietly.

“About—ten years.”

“Oh——”

“Ten years,” repeated Hemmick, staring out into the gathering darkness. “This is a little town you see: I say ten years because it was about ten years when the last reference to it came to my ears. But I was married long before that; had a kid. Cincinnati was out of my mind by that time.”

“Of course,” agreed Abercrombie.

They were both silent for a moment—then Hemmick added apologetically:

“That was sort of a long story, and I don't know if it could have interested you much. But you asked me——”

“It *did* interest me,” answered Abercrombie politely.

"It interested me tremendously. It interested me much more than I thought it would."

It occurred to Hemmick that he himself had never realized what a curious, rounded tale it was. He saw dimly now that what had seemed to him only a fragment, a grotesque interlude was really significant, complete. It was an interesting story; it was the story upon which turned the failure of his life. Abercrombie's voice broke in upon his thoughts.

"You see, it's so different from my story," Abercrombie was saying "It was an accident that you stayed—and it was an accident that I went away. You deserve more actual—actual credit, if there is such a thing in the world, for your intention of getting out and getting on. You see, I'd more or less gone wrong at seventeen. I was—well, what you call a Jelly-bean. All I wanted was to take it easy through life—and one day I just happened to see a sign up above my head that had on it: 'Special rate to Atlanta, three dollars and forty-two cents.' So I took out my change and counted it——"

Hemmick nodded. Still absorbed in his own story, he had forgotten the importance, the comparative magnificence of Abercrombie. Then suddenly he found himself listening sharply:

"I had just three dollars and forty-one cents in my pocket. But, you see, I was standing in line with a lot of other young fellows down by the Union Depot about to enlist in the army for three years. And I saw that extra penny on the walk not three feet away. I saw it because it was brand new and shining in the sun like gold."

The Georgia night had settled over the street, and as the blue drew down upon the dust the outlines of the two men had become less distinct, so that it was not easy for any one who passed along the walk to tell that one of these men was of the few and the other of no importance. All the detail was gone—Abercrombie's fine gold wrist watch, his collar, that he ordered by the dozen from London, the dignity that sat upon him in his chair—all faded and were engulfed with Hemmick's awkward suit and preposterous humped shoes into that pervasive depth of night that, like death, made nothing matter, nothing differentiate, nothing remain. And a little later on a passerby saw only the two glowing disks about the size of a penny that marked the rise and fall of their cigars.



## MOTI GUJ—MUTINEER \*

By RUDYARD KIPLING

ONCE upon a time there was a coffee-planter in India who wished to clear some forest land for coffee-planting. When he had cut down all the trees and burned the underwood, the stumps still remained. Dynamite is expensive and slow fire slow. The happy medium for stump-clearing is the lord of all beasts, who is the elephant. He will either push the stump out of the ground with his tusks, if he has any, or drag it out with ropes. The planter, therefore, hired elephants by ones and twos and threes, and fell to work. The very best of all the elephants belonged to the very worst of all the drivers or mahouts; and this superior beast's name was Moti Guj. He was the absolute property of his mahout, which would never have been the case under native rule: for Moti Guj was a creature to be desired by kings, and his name, being translated, meant the Pearl Elephant. Because the British government was in the land, Deesa, the mahout, enjoyed his property undisturbed. He was dissipated. When he had made much money through the strength of his elephant, he would get extremely drunk and give Moti Guj a beating with a tent-peg over the tender nails of the forefeet. Moti Guj never trampled the life out of Deesa on these occasions, for he knew that after the beating was over,

\* Reprinted from *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

Deesa would embrace his trunk and weep and call him his love and his life and the liver of his soul, and give him some liquor. Moti Guj was very fond of liquor—arrack for choice, though he would drink palm-tree toddy if nothing better offered. Then Deesa would go to sleep between Moti Guj's forefeet, and as Deesa generally chose the middle of the public road, and as Moti Guj mounted guard over him, and would not permit horse, foot, or cart to pass by, traffic was congested till Deesa saw fit to wake up.

There was no sleeping in the day-time on the planter's clearing: the wages were too high to risk. Deesa sat on Moti Guj's neck and gave him orders, while Moti Guj rooted up the stumps—for he owned a magnificent pair of tusks; or pulled at the end of a rope—for he had a magnificent pair of shoulders—while Deesa kicked him behind the ears and said he was the king of elephants. At evening time Moti Guj would wash down his three hundred pounds' weight of green food with a quart of arrack, and Deesa would take a share, and sing songs between Moti Guj's legs till it was time to go to bed. Once a week Deesa led Moti Guj down to the river, and Moti Guj lay on his side luxuriously in the shallows, while Deesa went over him with a coir swab and a brick. Moti Guj never mistook the pounding blow of the latter for the smack of the former that warned him to get up and turn over on the other side. Then Deesa would look at his feet and examine his eyes, and turn up the fringes of his mighty ears in case of sores or budding ophthalmia. After inspection the two would "come up with a song from the sea," Moti Guj, all black and shining, waving a torn tree branch twelve feet long

in his trunk, and Deesa knotting up his own long wet hair.

It was a peaceful, well-paid life till Deesa felt the return of the desire to drink deep. He wished for an orgy. The little draughts that led nowhere were taking the manhood out of him.

He went to the planter, and "My mother's dead," said he, weeping.

"She died on the last plantation two months ago, and she died once before that when you were working for me last year," said the planter, who knew something of the ways of natedom.

"Then it's my aunt, and she was just the same as a mother to me," said Deesa, weeping more than ever. "She has left eighteen small children entirely without bread, and it is I who must fill their little stomachs," said Deesa, beating his head on the floor.

"Who brought you the news?" said the planter.

"The post," said Deesa.

"There hasn't been a post here for the past week. Get back to your lines!"

"A devastating sickness has fallen on my village, and all my wives are dying," yelled Deesa, really in tears this time.

"Call Chihun, who comes from Deesa's village," said the planter. "Chihun, has this man got a wife?"

"He?" said Chihun. "No. Not a woman of our village would look at him. They'd sooner marry the elephant."

Chihun snorted. Deesa wept and bellowed.

"You will get into a difficulty in a minute," said the planter. "Go back to your work!"

"Now I will speak Heaven's truth," gulped Deesa, with an inspiration. "I haven't been drunk for two months. I desire to depart in order to get properly drunk afar off and distant from this heavenly plantation. Thus I shall cause no trouble."

A flickering smile crossed the planter's face. "Deesa," said he, "you've spoken the truth, and I'd give you leave on the spot if anything could be done with Moti Guj while you're away. You know that he will only obey your orders."

"May the light of the heavens live forty thousand years. I shall be absent but ten little days. After that, upon my faith and honor and soul, I return. As to the inconsiderable interval, have I the gracious permission of the heaven-born to call up Moti Guj?"

Permission was granted, and in answer to Deesa's shrill yell, the mighty tusker swung out of the shade of a clump of trees where he had been squirting dust over himself till his master should return.

"Light of my heart, protector of the drunken, mountain of might, give ear!" said Deesa, standing in front of him.

Moti Guj gave ear, and saluted with his trunk. "I am going away," said Deesa.

Moti Guj's eyes twinkled. He liked jaunts as well as his master. One could snatch all manner of nice things from the road-side then.

"But you, you fussy old pig, must stay behind and work."

The twinkle died out as Moti Guj tried to look delighted. He hated stump-hauling on the plantation. It hurt his teeth.

"I shall be gone for ten days, oh, delectable one! Hold up your near forefoot and I'll impress the fact upon it, warty toad of a dried mud-puddle." Deesa took a tent-peg and banged Moti Guj ten times on the nails. Moti Guj grunted and shuffled from foot to foot.

"Ten days," said Deesa, "you will work and haul and root the trees as Chihun here shall order you. Take up Chihun and set him on your neck!" Moti Guj curled the tip of his trunk, Chihun put his foot there, and was swung on to the neck. Deesa handed Chihun the heavy *ankus*—the iron elephant goad.

Chihun thumped Moti Guj's bald head as a paver thumps a curbstone.

Moti Guj trumpeted.

"Be still, hog of the backwoods! Chihun's your mahout for ten days. And now bid me good-by, beast after mine own heart. Oh, my lord, my king! Jewel of all created elephants, lily of the herd, preserve your honored health; be virtuous. Adieu!"

Moti Guj lapped his trunk round Deesa and swung him into the air twice. That was his way of bidding him good-by.

"He'll work now," said Deesa to the planter. "Have I leave to go?"

The planter nodded, and Deesa dived into the woods. Moti Guj went back to haul stumps.

Chihun was very kind to him, but he felt unhappy and forlorn for all that. Chihun gave him a ball of spices, and tickled him under the chin, and Chihun's little baby cooed to him after work was over, and Chihun's wife called him a darling; but Moti Guj was

a bachelor by instinct, as Deesa was. He did not understand the domestic emotions. He wanted the light of his universe back again—the drink and the drunken slumber, the savage beatings and the savage caresses.

None the less he worked well, and the planter wondered. Deesa had wandered along the roads till he met a marriage procession of his own caste, and, drinking, dancing, and tippling, had drifted with it past all knowledge of the lapse of time.

The morning of the eleventh day dawned, and there returned no Deesa. Moti Guj was loosed from his ropes for the daily stint. He swung clear, looked round, shrugged his shoulders, and began to walk away, as one having business elsewhere.

“Hi! ho! Come back, you!” shouted Chihun. “Come back and put me on your neck, misborn mountain! Return, splendor of the hill-sides! Adornment of all India, heave to, or I’ll bang every toe off your fat forefoot!”

Moti Guj gurgled gently, but did not obey. Chihun ran after him with a rope and caught him up. Moti Guj put his ears forward, and Chihun knew what that meant, though he tried to carry it off with high words.

“None of your nonsense with me,” said he. “To your pickets, devil-son!”

“Hrrump!” said Moti Guj, and that was all—that and the forebent ears.

Moti Guj put his hands in his pockets, chewed a branch for a toothpick, and strolled about the clearing, making fun of the other elephants who had just set to work.

Chihun reported the state of affairs to the planter,



who came out with a dog-whip and cracked it furiously. Moti Guj paid the white man the compliment of charging him nearly a quarter of a mile across the clearing and "Hrrumphing" him into his veranda. Then he stood outside the house, chuckling to himself and shaking all over with the fun of it as an elephant will.

"We'll thrash him," said the planter. "He shall have the finest thrashing ever elephant received. Give Kala Nag and Nazim twelve foot of chain apiece, and tell them to lay on twenty."

Kala Nag—which means Black Snake—and Nazim were two of the biggest elephants in the lines, and one of their duties was to administer the graver punishment, since no man can beat an elephant properly.

They took the whipping-chains and rattled them in their trunks as they sidled up to Moti Guj, meaning to hustle him between them. Moti Guj had never, in all his life of thirty-nine years, been whipped, and he did not intend to begin a new experience. So he waited, waving his head from right to left, and measuring the precise spot in Kala Nag's fat side where a blunt tusk could sink deepest. Kala Nag had no tusks; the chain was the badge of his authority; but for all that, he swung wide of Moti Guj at the last minute, and tried to appear as if he had brought the chain out for amusement. Nazim turned round and went home early. He did not feel fighting fit that morning and so Moti Guj was left standing alone with his ears cocked.

That decided the planter to argue no more, and Moti Guj rolled back to his amateur inspection of the clearing. An elephant who will not work and is not tied up is about as manageable as an eighty-one-ton gun loose

in a heavy seaway. He slapped old friends on the back and asked them if the stumps were coming away easily; he talked nonsense concerning labor and the inalienable rights of elephants to a long "nooning"; and, wandering to and fro, he thoroughly demoralized the garden till sundown, when he returned to his picket for food.

"If you won't work, you sha'n't eat," said Chihun, angrily. "You're a wild elephant, and no educated animal at all. Go back to your jungle."

Chihun's little brown baby was rolling on the floor of the hut, and stretching out its fat arms to the huge shadow in the doorway. Moti Guj knew well that it was the dearest thing on earth to Chihun. He swung out his trunk with a fascinating crook at the end, and the brown baby threw itself, shouting, upon it. Moti Guj made fast and pulled up till the brown baby was crowing in the air twelve feet above his father's head.

"Great Lord!" said Chihun. "Flour cakes of the best, twelve in number, two feet across and soaked in rum, shall be yours on the instant, and two hundred pounds weight of fresh-cut young sugar-cane therewith. Deign only to put down safely that insignificant brat who is my heart and my life to me!"

Moti Guj tucked the brown baby comfortably between his forefeet, that could have knocked into toothpicks all Chihun's hut, and waited for his food. He ate it, and the brown baby crawled away. Moti Guj dozed and thought of Deesa. One of many mysteries connected with the elephant is that his huge body needs less sleep than anything else that lives. Four or five hours in the night suffice—two just before midnight, lying down on one side; two just after one o'clock, lying down on

the other. The rest of the silent hours are filled with eating and fidgeting, and long grumbling soliloquies.

At midnight, therefore, Moti Guj strode out of his pickets, for a thought had come to him that Deesa might be lying drunk somewhere in the dark forest with none to look after him. So all that night he chased through the undergrowth, blowing and trumpeting and shaking his ears. He went down to the river and blared across the shallows where Deesa used to wash him, but there was no answer. He could not find Deesa, but he disturbed all the other elephants in the lines, and nearly frightened to death some gypsies in the woods.

At dawn Deesa returned to the plantation. He had been very drunk indeed, and he expected to get into trouble for outstaying his leave. He drew a long breath when he saw that the bungalow and the plantation were still uninjured, for he knew something of Moti Guj's temper, and reported himself with many lies and salaams. Moti Guj had gone to his pickets for breakfast. The night exercise had made him hungry.

"Call up your beast," said the planter; and Deesa shouted in the mysterious elephant language that some mahouts believe came from China at the birth of the world, when elephants and not men were masters. Moti Guj heard and came. Elephants do not gallop. They move from places at varying rates of speed. If an elephant wished to catch an express train he could not gallop, but he could catch the train. So Moti Guj was at the planter's door almost before Chihun noticed that he had left his pickets. He fell into Deesa's arms trumpeting with joy, and the man and beast wept and

slobbered over each other, and handled each other from head to heel to see that no harm had befallen.

"Now we will get to work," said Deesa. "Lift me up, my son and my joy!"

Moti Guj swung him up, and the two went to the coffee-clearing to look for difficult stumps.

The planter was too astonished to be very angry.

## THE STRANGE FLOWER \*

By EDWINA STANTON BABCOCK

IT took two sticks to get Mr. Loogy along the road to town. These two sticks, propping his rheumatic legs, made him look, straw hat and basket on arm, like a freakish old spider crawling over the hill.

The children got his fantastic quality; swinging on gates, garrulous in cherry-trees, they began their screaming comment, "Grandpoppy Tippy-toe, Grandpoppy Tippy-toe!" Like primitives, they danced out their little ritual of contempt. They capered savage comment on the old beard and the old legs and the old sticks.

Mr. Loogy stopped; he waved one of the crooked sticks in a terrible gesture, calling out in his cracked voice, "Ef ye was mine, ye young loafers, I'd skin ye alive!" Having once demonstrated, he never looked back; the children ceased their shoutings, appeased by the ecstasy of having, in fancy, been "skinned alive." It was an old country drama, staged long before the sensitive Elijah brought trained bears into his act.

Mr. Loogy, hobbling along a little farther, met Gordon Mayhew, the "city fellow" who was starting on one of his fishing hikes. The pleasant-faced youth saluted. He had his rods in a handsome leather case, his creel was a shade too foppish, but there was conscious power

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in the limber legs, there was temper of steel to the slender back.

"My night-bloomin' cereus is a-comin' out to-night," cackled Mr. Loogy.

The youth, plunged in thought, stopped.

"No?" he inquired cordially. He had the air of sober interest that made him liked along the countryside.

"Now you want to come up and see her," said the old man impressively. "Ye ain't never seen one in yer life, have yer?"

"*Her!*" teased the youth with gray-eyed mischief.

"Shut up!" deprecated Mr. Loogy. "They say 'her' for a boat or a ottermobile, don't they, or anything that is pooty and new? This here flower is new," he boasted. "There's a good many ain't never seen one."

The shrewd old eyes twinkled. "I'm goin' to show her off to-night; I'm goin' to hev a party for her." Mr. Loogy loved to be facetious.

Young Mayhew was sympathetic. "I've seen these things; they are unusual," he admitted. "What'll you take for this first flower?" he asked.

Now Mr. Loogy abandoned the support of his crooked sticks and betook himself to the trellis of the snake fence, zigzagging along the wayside. Here he hung like a bit of dried vine. The old man's eyes behind their dim square-paned glasses were keen and pleased; they were the eyes of one who tells himself that he sees very far indeed.

"There's been others has asked," he announced waggishly. Mr. Loogy cackled in light, surface laughter. He festooned himself more jauntily on the fence. "Ef I don't mistake they want 'em for their gals. Wal,



it's long since I've bought a flower for a gal myself." He spat, the better to mark the hurrying years. "It was nigh onto forty years ago; it's forty years, ain't it, since they had the big fair for the land-boomin' down to Peters Corners?" Mr. Loogy, looking upward, asked the sky this question, and the sky evidently corroborated him, for he went on, "And then it seems that that boom didn't never come to Peters Corners after all! Nobody knows where that boom went, but I know that there was a band played into Snider's woods that night, and they had a merry-go-round and a big wooden pavillyon. They had a pavillyon," said Mr. Loogy, dwelling on the word with unction, "and there was some fellers got drunk and laid around in the woods for two days. Bakase," said Mr. Loogy with the air of a philosopher, "when you turn some folks loose a-dancin', they dance themselves crazy—it's in 'em, I guess." Mr. Loogy once more addressed his friend, the sky, who seemed to remind him of what he had been starting to say, for he continued with a look of spritelike daring in his eyes, "I bought a paper flower that night—'twas an awful pooty flower; a rose it was, with artifishul perfum'ry into the center."

A curious look like dread was on his hearer's face. The vision of the artificial perfumed flower seemed to flicker deep into Mayhew's consciousness; he had the look of youth that asks itself fearfully, "Shall I ever be like this? Oh, shall I *ever* be like this?" This look Mr. Loogy mistook for business concentration; he strung himself more easily on the fence.

"So ye want to buy my night-bloomer! Hey?"

"What'll you take for it?"

The old man now pushed back his straw hat; his white hair hung in strings to his shoulders; his jaws mumbled happily over the tobacco that did not altogether remain between them. In his dried sunniness of being he was like a gnarled old scrub that buffeted and starved and stabbed, by all the ingenuity of cruel weather, yet has a thousand little devices for hoarding rain and sun.

"Now, now, now," he protested happily, "don't git reckless; don't buy nothin' until you've seen it! She opens to-night—half past seven—well, I say half past seven"—Mr. Loogy corrected himself—"but it'll be whenever she takes the notion. I cal'late there's a good many will come up the hill to see her. You come on up." He left the support of the fence, caught his sticks, and hobbled over to the young man, feeling of him in a curious way as if to test his pith. "I ain't sayin' nothin'," he whispered facetiously; "I don't keep no greenhouse, but I ain't sayin' I wouldn't sell her after the show." He looked shrewdly into young Mayhew's face. "Five dollars?"

"Hey?" coaxed Mr. Loogy as to a child. "Five dollars? How? What say? Five dollars?"

It was a day of triumph for Mr. Loogy. The countryside knew that he had been at great pains to raise his night-blooming flower, and against much unbelief and protests as to his sanity ran the strong stream of detailed comment. There was a saga of the efforts he had been to to procure the original plant, then of his pruning and cutting, the Winter sojourn under glass in Loogy's kitchen, the nourishing and fertilizing, and now this extraordinary promise, "A large, fragrant, luminous,

showy flower that (in the language of the catalog) blooms at night only, remaining open till sunrise." It galvanized every dinner-table over the countryside; at every farm, between knife-thrusts of food, there were bursts of wondering, jeering talk about Loogy's "night-bloomer." But it was not until Midsummer, when the valley village, shimmering in hot grass, was a welter of green heat, that they were aware of the old man hobbling from door to door announcing gleefully and positively:

"She's a-comin', she's a-comin'. I expect her to-night! Now I want ye should all come up to my house and look at her."

At the Judge's house the prosperous man of his own age looked at him enviously. Mr. Loogy's radiance annoyed the bored country autocrat. The Judge had just bought a large chromo called *Tiberius Inspecting His Slaves*, which had somehow failed to cheer him. His goldfish had grown monotonous, his automobile cloying. His piano-player, stuck in the middle of *The Anvil Chorus*, must wait for the agent to come and restore it to its sniffing velocity. The Judge, slightly annoyed that his contemporary should have made good on his flower-raising pretensions, now wheezed out pompous questions.

"What'll you take for the whole plant?" he snorted. He sat lumpily on his rose-twined piazza, trying by adroit cross-questionings to discover if the flower were really as rare as old Loogy seemed to think. How many buds were there on the night-bloomer? The Judge had the air of jocose tolerance; the thing, if it were actually as remarkable as old Loogy thought it was, might be

used for political purposes, for banquets of the coming campaign year, for instance. It would look well in the newspapers. "Judge Parsons made one of his inimitable speeches standing in the shade of his peerless night-blooming cereus, taken, for the occasion, from the bosky recesses of his private conservatories."

"I'll be along to-night, all right," accepted the Judge patronizingly. "Take one of them cigars, Loogy; take a handful," he ordered.

"Don't rob yourself," cackled the awed Mr. Loogy. He reached a timid old hand into the box of cigars, a look of furious pride and pleasure swept over his face. "Don't rob yourself," he cautioned.

At the widow Fayber's house came the real excitement. For here lived Barella Fayber, "The Living Corpse," as the neighborhood proudly called her. Mrs. Fayber, the mother of the celebrity, stood in the "entry" of the basement, where the family spent most of its life. The woman, who had come from the vegetable garden, carried a dish full of scarlet tomatoes, green peppers, and purple eggplants; her tight-braided hair sent out little jets of gray curl, and her sunken blue eyes brightened with starved vitality. To Mr. Loogy's announcement her "What say?" was almost girlish. "Wait till I go fetch Barella," she urged, and her excitement gave an extra glint to the old man's pride.

Mr. Loogy graciously halted. There was a rustic garden seat beneath a stunted cherry-tree; this he took; beside it was a gypsy-encampment effect of three poles painted red, white, and blue, from which suspended a scarlet kettle. When Mrs. Fayber returned Mr. Loogy had removed his hat, also his coat; now he sat stocking-

feet and shirt-sleeves, wiping his forehead and surveying the gypsy kettle, into which, occasionally, he spat.

"That's a pretty piece of style," he praised politely.

"It's Barella's taste." Mrs. Fayber pointed to a heap of stones where ivy straggled and a little leaden figure careened on top. "And that's her rockery," she said in an awed whisper. "Where she gets it I don't know except that often she'll take an idea right out of poetry. Just so sudden!"

"I ain't no hand for poetry," remarked Mr. Loogy with some severity. "It upsets your idees; I mistrust that it's for the most part writ by them that ain't got good sense."

"Hush!" Mrs. Fayber indicated with warning thumb over shoulder that the conversation must not have this blighting character; for The Living Corpse was emerging from the damp, stone entry and creeping slowly up the stairs. At the top of the steps Barella paused in a business-like manner, waiting for her mother to come and assist her. Then, with fine dramatic effects of tottering, she swayed toward the garden seat already occupied by the visitor.

"Look at her," moaned the mother proudly—"ain't she *awful*? She kin hardly step anywheres now; can yer, Barella?"

"I'm weaker than I was this time last year," announced The Corpse with an air of conviction.

"I've doctored her with this one and that one," worried the woman, looking with elated anxiety at her child, "but they all say, 'Medicine ain't no good, Mrs. Fayber; she's got to do something for herself.' Well," summed up Mrs. Fayber triumphantly, "we know now that

medicines ain't no good; she's took the two whole drug-stores here and over to Peters Corners. How many bottles was it I counted last Winter, Bar?" She looked dotingly upon the carefully symmetrized crimps of her daughter's golden head. "Never mind, Pettie," the mother went on sentimentally; "don't get a-thinking of it. Now you set down by Mr. Loogy and he'll tell you all about the 'serious.'"

Mrs. Fayber pronounced the strange flower's name as if it had been the adjective opposed to "humorous"; but all through the district it had now become the fashion to speak of the rare plant as "Loogy's bloomer" or the "night-blooming comic." Barella had heard all this from her suitor, Tanner Pollen, and she had had a good deal of curiosity about the flower; it was, however, significant to see the way the girl carefully managed to keep the morning's interest from in any way vitalizing her. Barella Fayber, like Judge Parsons, had her instinct for prestige and importance. And she had achieved a very marked importance. To be known all over the countryside as "The Living Corpse" kept for her a marvelous purpose in a life that otherwise might have been imaginatively barren. Night after night she lay in bed dramatizing her own funeral, the dress she would wear, the way her hair should be arranged, a golden braid on each side of her white face; the neighbors coming in whispering and "taking on." Her nature, young and under its apathy weakly awake, demanded that she should in some way, like a plant in a cellar, give forth a peculiar white phosphorus, and so she did.

Barella now dreamed herself anew before old Mr.



Loogy. He should go back to his section, telling how he had seen The Living Corpse, the palest, weakest girl in the community, and how she was just fading away! Her curious white kindle of youth glimmered like Indian-pipe in the thickets of her own negations. She thought of her body, slender and listless, under her muslins and felt morbid pleasure. As she sat listlessly down by the old man, Barella wanted to feel his horrified eyes on her; she wanted to hear the familiar shocked breath, the "St—st—st—" of country sensation. She put up a thin, almost transparent hand. "The sun scalds something terrible, don't it, Mommer?"

"It's your parasol you need." Mrs. Fayber bustled in to get it.

Old Mr. Loogy peered over his square-paned spectacles. His eyes, very frivolous and not too respectful, surveyed the girl.

"You'm like my cereus, ain't you?" he observed jocosely. "You only want to come out nights, hey? like the bats and moths, hey? Well, girl, you ain't got the right idee. That poetry you read is sourin' on your stummick." Mr. Loogy looked a little severe. "You need to be more corn-fed," he announced. After a short scrutinizing silence, "Get married," advised Mr. Loogy with emphasis; "a husband might cheer ye up some; you'm too pip-lookin' now."

Just the faintest tremor of a very healthy irritation suffused the young cheek, and the old man, keen through his square dim spectacles, chuckled; but the mother hushed him back of her swollen-veined hand. She carefully opened the pale-blue sunshade, and stood there, holding it over her daughter's listless head.

"Don't be speaking of marriage," Mrs. Fayber entreated dramatically. "She's had two spells because of that this year. Tanner Pollen is tormenting she should marry him. He teases her so she can't sleep for his pestering."

"Pollen, hey?" asked Mr. Loogy, "Tanner Pollen?" For a moment he was silent, eyes fixed on The Living Corpse. There was something earthy and like dark leaf-mold in the old eyes; they seemed to be saturated with strange layers of experience and knowledge; it was a pagan, vital knowledge that lay like rich, dark compost over the anemic conventions of modern thought.

"Well, I don't know as she could do better," the old man said slowly. His gaze was now something like that of a physician; very thoughtfully and as if she were a spindling plant, he surveyed the drooping Barella. His crooked fingers worked as if in imagination they loosened the stiff mold around her.

"But she's *pestered* with him," insisted the mother. "She says that maybe she's going to ask me to sit with them in the best room beau-nights, so that he'll leave off tormenting her to have him."

The pale eyes of The Living Corpse were now glittering sapphire; her lips settled into a faint curve of egotistic power.

"I ain't never give him no encouragement," said Barella faintly—"it seems that nothing I do discourages him." Her manner was that of the indifferent virgin, but under it lay the inherence of her reality—the desire to attract.

"They say he's thought well of over back," conceded Mrs. Fayber, who was frankly interested by the worldly

aspects of the thing. She looked tentatively at the aged caller.

Mr. Loogy's eyes were shining all through the discussion. Here was a morning of delights! Camaraderie with a young city man, full of his devilment; a business deal on the roadside; the silencing of wicked children, who certainly should be skinned alive; his pocket full of cigars, which he should not smoke, but keep for years in a glass preserve-jar, where they could be indicated as gifts from his close friend, the Judge; and now his advice in matters of love asked by two women!

From his long experience with the vagaries and evasions of flowers, from his knowledge of their utter dependence upon the great laws of nature while they appeared to flout these laws, so Mr. Loogy felt that he knew the sex; he could not find himself altogether unkind to the curious subterfuges, self-deceptions, and final inevitable betrayal of the female, so flower-like in its plaintive, hidden wish, so subtle in its myriad open denials of that wish. ~

"So Tanner hankers for ye, don't he?" he asked the girl. He spoke gently, but he eyed her with a frowning keenness which, had he known it, was worthy of the enchanter Merlin. Barella was no Vivian to respond; she moved impatiently with a feeble gesture. Her head slanted sidewise; the delicate blouse of her mother's laundering fell away from a long neck, thin, with a kind of wicked whiteness; her hands and feet, elegant and disdainful, puzzled the old man. He looked curiously at the lax expression, almost vacuity, under the stiffly rippled masses of dry golden hair.

'He mentally paired this girl, kept like this through

egotism, with one he had passed that morning coming out of the hollow: Stella McWhood, for whom he knew young Mayhew wished to buy the cereus; a girl bold-bosomed as a peony, free-stepping, high-headed like a young tree— Well, many a man might decide that it would be dangerous fun to try to drive that passionate head, those darkling eyes, past the curious obstacles and fluttering terrors on the roadway of life. Yet it was to Stella McWhood that Mayhew, the "city fellow," wished to give the night-blooming flower. Now the old man, used to snaring rabbits, subtle at hooking trout, tried a certain leering species of decoy.

"Better take Tanner before Stella McWhood decides she wants him," he suggested. "I see she's got Mayhew, the 'city fellow,' crazy about her. There they was dancing that night at the sociable." He reached for his basket, apparently not seeing the slow, obstinate flush that crept over the cheek of The Living Corpse. But Mr. Loogy had always put dynamite under hydrangea-bushes that had become a little down in the mouth; now he exploded dynamite of imagination and got results.

"I dunno as I care; it's nothing to me," said Barella Fayber, but one hand went to her hair, and the lift of the sapphire eyes to her mother was sudden, abrupt. Mr. Loogy's face was a mass of canny radiations.

"Well, ain't it a strange thing?" he cackled as he made his preparations to depart. "Here I come with my night-bloomin' cereus; me, an old man as is all wore out, and all the young fellers and girls want what I got!"

Finally getting to his feet, he stood trembling and

chuckling. "It takes an old feller," said Mr. Loogy triumphantly, "to get ahead of things."

Staggering between the two crooked canes, he called up his feeble powers of locomotion. "Well, good-by, all," he gasped cordially. "Seven o'clock to-night! You'm liable to get there late unless ye come early; I wouldn't be surprised if she took the notion to open a little before the time." The old man, glancing at Barella, paused.

"Get married," he said kindly; "get married to Tanner Pollen (if ye can git him). Pollen's rich; I've seen him shovin' his money through the bank window; and he's kind. They tell how he took care of a sick kitten like it was his sister. That feller's strong and good," the old man said seriously to Mrs. Fayber; through thoughtful spectacles he blinked upon the listless girl, and fingers still working as if loosening imaginary mold, Mr. Loogy applied one more small charge of dynamite. "He ain't no fool, Tanner ain't," he observed slyly; "you'd have to mind him, hey? He'll make a strong woman of ye—that's what a-worryin' ye, ain't it?" queried Mr. Loogy. "Hey? Hey? That's what a-worryin' ye?" Then with an elfish cackle he added once more, "Take care Stella don't get him away from ye. I wish she'd have him."

Together the two women watched him depart. They stood stiffly like newly planted shrubs where he had heaped the rich loam of his advice about them. Mrs. Fayber put the country seal of tolerance on his remarks. "Ain't he comical?" she said unctuously; "ain't he comical?" but she saw that her daughter was displeased, so she played skillfully on the one responsive string.

"Go into the best room and lay down, Lovey; this sun makes you terrible dizzy. You lay down and I'll bring you your camphor and cologne."

At four o'clock that afternoon young Mayhew, returning from fishing, met Stella McWhood on the road. She was on her way from the corner store, bearing a great basket of groceries. The man noticed how even this sort of burden, which the country-women invariably carry pretentiously, one arm stuck stiffly out, this girl bore easily with rapid dignity and grace. He stopped and spoke to her as she gave her stiff greeting and tried to pass him.

"Stella," he pleaded, "Stella, why won't you be friends with me? That one night at the barn-dance you were so gay and kind! But now you'd think we hardly knew each other."

The girl paused; she gravely put down her basket, and her finely modeled face with its ripe curves seemed slowly to enrich with the slow rise of her natural fire. "You're here for no good." She said it softly with a sort of parrot effect, and Mayhew, while admiring her effort to meet him squarely, could not help loathing the country appreciations of virtue poisoning an otherwise clean mind.

Sitting down on the stone wall which ran along the roadside, he lit a cigarette, looking fixedly at the girl. "Do you think it is only women who wish to be good?" he asked very gently.

The girl stood there helplessly, abashed; she was stung, cut to the heart by the candor of this thing coming from the youth, a certain gentle deliberation and a wisdom that terrified while it attracted her. Her arms



quivered as she stood before the man like a frightened animal. "You—you—come—from the city," she said slowly; she could not look at him, but he caught in her eye, under the straight black brows, murky imaginations of city loathliness.

"The city has lots of good people in it," Mayhew said. He got up. "I don't like to be sitting down while you stand."

"I'll sit over here," the girl declared nervously. She knew she could not leave him; he held her like a magnet, but her keen country instinct told her that she must not let herself get near him. Sitting bolt upright on the rock she had chosen, she looked at him defiantly yet with a softening in the liquid gaze.

"Are you going to see the night-blooming cereus?" asked the man smilingly.

She nodded. "Everybody's goin'; the school-teacher and Mr. Farding, the tax-collector, and some says the doctor himself is a-goin'. Nobody don't believe that it will really come open. Some says it's a fool-flower; they're all teasin' Mr. Loogy."

"I'm going to buy that first blossom of the plant for you," announced Mayhew, looking admiringly at her. "I saw Loogy this morning. You'll only have one night to love it in; it dies the next day." The young fellow, hands clasped around knees, sat drinking in the unconscious beauty of the girl, gypsy-like, against a background of leafage; he turned over in his mind, as clearly as he could, for the enchantment of his senses, what she really represented. She was not ungraceful nor coarse, though she was untutored; her personality, ex-

pressing only the country traditions, with all the countryside slackness of speech; but she was a woman, by God, a glorious woman! Mayhew thought of them there in the city, of his changing background. Women, whom he constantly met socially, who seemed covered with an extraordinary patina of sophistication; women vitiated spiritually, mentally, yet attitudinizing correctly, playing with a dubious method they called "tact"; an extraordinary gamblers' game for stakes that they seldom really coveted.

The young fellow rose; he went over to the girl, soberly still on her rocky perch.

"Perhaps it isn't fair," Mayhew said slowly. "I'm rather sure it isn't perfectly fair to a child like you; but, Stella, I'm going to do it; *I'm going to ask you now.*"

The girl flashed a deep, comprehending but awed and terrified look at him. "Don't," she whispered, "oh, *don't*," she braced herself, leaning away from him.

"Yes," he insisted in low, quiet tones, "I may not have another chance like this, and—and it's got to be! Stella, I want to be honest with life. I don't want to marry a social position, a bank-account; I want to marry a woman. I—I think I am worthy of you." The young fellow stood there thoughtfully; then he spoke to her curiously as he would to a child.

"Look around you at these great green trees, the big fields where the daisies move; listen to that bird; hear the brook, and see the wild geraniums far back in the wood; smell the growing, Stella; feel the submission, the turning of the earth's great tender truth to the sun;

the waking of everything, and then answer me—" He paused, and then asked with a sort of religious grandeur, "Will you marry me?"

She sat dumbly staring at him, terrified at his exhortation and his bold question. But young Mayhew did not notice this; he had made up his own mind. He reached down, took her hot hand, and put his mouth close to the warm hair by her ear. "Stella," he asked, and she got the cool purpose in his voice, "Stella, will you marry me?"

Panic darkened the young, implicit eyes. "I can't tell," she said piteously. "I can't believe it—you—you asking me to marry you, like that; why, it's—I think you must be fooling."

Mayhew stood up. A curious glow was in his face; the touch of her warm shoulder had swept him with a thrilling assurance that made him happy in his own conviction. "I'm not going to tease you nor hurry you," he said practically. "I won't hurt you, dear, and—and you mustn't be afraid of me; that would spoil your clearness—Stella," he stood looking down at her thoughtfully, "you don't know how wonderful you are. You're like a clear brown brook running under the low hemlocks." The young fellow stood looking at her. He was very alert, and something authoritative and definite had come into his manner; he gazed kindly, like an older brother, upon the girl, who was alert, tremulous, trying to understand the many voices that cried within her.

"I think it's wrong," she repeated at last. Her sweet breath came to him, and he saw the simple, strong bosom rise and fall sharply. "My mother used to tell me,

‘Don’t have no traffic with them that’s out of your class; let them go their way and you go your.’ ”

“There are no classes,” observed young Mayhew, with just a faint touch of pomp.

The young fellow looked solemnly possessively on her; already he saw her as wife, and the purity and decency of his purpose were in his dark-blue eyes. Mayhew inveighed against this idea of class; he arrayed his theories against these deep-sounding notes of a woman’s instinct.

He threw back his head magisterially. “I make my own class; so will you. All I believe in,” he laughed triumphantly, “is that the most glorious girl in the world is going to be my wife.”

She looked as if he blasphemed, but he smiled upon her with a calm superiority. “My cigarette’s smoked; let me carry your basket. To-night, Stella, I’ll bring you that great white flower; it will be our engagement-flower, and we’ll walk home together from Loogy’s.”

She stared at him with dark wonder. He was so *sure*; that was the way people always acted who’d had everything. “I couldn’t,” she said simply. She looked with curious desolation down the long, dusty country road, and her being drooped. “They—they’d *talk*,” she said in a low voice.

“Let them talk,” Mayhew was unmoved, “and when they see me give you the cereus they’ll talk some more, and they’ll talk about how you are to be my bride. Why, Stella, dear, it will be fun,” he told her joyously; “it’s nice to be talked about when one is happy!”

He was so kind, so sure; almost, she told herself, like a minister. She let him take the basket from her and move beside her, keeping strictly far from his side. The

sun slanted through the ranging trees, and the golden waver of wind-lifted leaves played patterns upon them.

The character of the gathering at Mr. Loogy's was unusual, but it varied from the solemnity of a funeral to the banter of a picnic. It was also curiously like a wedding. In the evening light the brown-cloaked flower hung veiled and tremulous on its trellis like a drooping, reluctant bride. The groups of country people, having come from curiosity, now availed themselves of sociability. They went about in threes and twos talking vigorously of many things: the burglary at the drug-store, a train murder at some station "down the line"; and there were local matters to discuss; there were sly whispers of Mayhew's attention to the McWhood girl, for one thing.

"She'll go the way her cousin went."

"I wouldn't have no girl of mine keepin' company with a city feller."

Attention was called to the ghostlike glimmering of The Living Corpse, who remained in the dark, cavelike buggy in which her mother had driven her to the exhibition. Many women halted by the wheel to stare at Barella and ask her questions. The girl, drooping in twilight pallor, wore a white-lace scarf over her crimped hair, and her face was the local idea of the quality called "angelic."

Even the old Judge, irritable and impatient, noticed her. Offended that the night-blooming cereus had not opened exactly on the dot of seven, the Judge had pronounced sentence. "I wouldn't have it in the house," he announced to one or two fellows. "It's uncertain; you couldn't never count onto it." Following the red

spark of his cigar toward the carriage, he surveyed The Corpse.

"Want to fatten her up some," he croaked to Mrs. Fayber. "Ain't she sort of 'mauger' for her years? Them kind takes to a gallop once they begin to go."

"She's as pale as alabaster," said one woman excitedly. This comment was luxuriously handed about. "Barella's as pale as alabaster." The sickly girl in her tenuous whiteness bade fair to be a rival to the strange flower so reluctant to open. Barella's transparent droop was compared with the Indian straightness, the vivid darkness of Stella McWhood's ripe hair and eyes and skin.

"Barella's so reefined," said one woman; she looked disapprovingly at the McWhood girl, standing aloof in a sort of royal loneliness.

"Barella's so pure-lookin'."

"Alabaster," "pearl-white," "purity," the country-women lovingly accorded these things to the listless creature in the buggy; then they poured their advice into Mrs. Fayber's credulous ear.

"Don't let her marry that there Tanner Pollen," they insisted. Furtively they let their gaze stray to young Mayhew. In the twilight he stood, well set up, slender, and trim, talking easily to the cigar-sucking Judge. "Mayhew and Barella!" Oh, the sanctified "reefine-ment" of an association like that! In some way the essential spirit of romance dwells in the uncultivated feminine mind. From the first sight of pink ribbon a little girl begins to feel romance; now these farm women beheld life through miles of hypothetical pink ribbon. "Barella and Mayhew!" They gloated over the imagi-



nary alliance; it was their expression of refinement, of elegance, their notion of what would be a "lovely pair."

Old Loogy, pottering about, bringing chairs, chasing away dogs, had finally borne forth the marvelous plant into the little plot in the rear of his house, and the coppery bud, at first pendent and like a sealed vase, now, under the old man's excited proclamation, began its mysterious nascence. The sun had slipped down like a coin in the purple coffers of the mountains; a moth fluttered duskily past the roses; the frogs in hollows slid their tiny trombones back and forth. Then, while the soft white Summer moon silvered the east and mysterious scents stole up from the woods, the night-blooming cereus opened.

For a while, with curious country inarticulateness, the groups viewed it. Most of the visitors manifested only indifference or contempt. But at last Tanner Pollen drew near to the raying disk. The clumsy, big fellow was clearly fascinated and not ashamed to show his awe. For a moment his great form almost hid the white flower as he put out one hand and in low tones interrogated Mr. Loogy.

"It's sort of touch-me-not," the man muttered; the proud exhibitor tittered:

"That there Mayhew's offered me five dollars for her," he boasted. Tanner looked angrily up. The young farmer's eyes flashed. "Five? I'll give you ten!

"I didn't know you'd sell it," he added, "but if Mayhew goes up, I'll go up; I want this for Barella. She hankers for it." Mr. Loogy nearly danced with excitement and derision. "For that girl?" he jeered in a disgusted chuckle. "The Corpse? Now, now," he looked

up and shook a paternal finger at the young farmer, "now for yer foolishness I'd a' lief sell it to the city feller for less. He wants it fer Stella McWhood; she's crazy about him. You'd ought to get Stella away from him!"

Once more Mr. Loogy tried his subtle species of snare; then, with the enthusiasm of a cultivator, he made some sturdy remarks on the wisdom of natural selection and the survival of the fittest; but he spoke to deaf ears. Barella Fayber, sitting high in the cave of the black buggy, had put up one hand to the scarf over her thin chest. The rug had fallen from the buggy; she peered helplessly over at it where it lay on the ground. Tanner noticed this and was instantly at her side; as he placed the rug over her knees he looked tenderly at her.

"Seems that he idolizes her," Barella's mother hastened to interpret Tanner kindly to some cronies. "She hankers for the cereus and he's goin' to buy it for her. Barella heard that young Mayhew was goin' to get it for the McWhood girl and so she come up herself to make sure."

"Barella's beau is going to buy the bloomer for her," so the word went around.

Stella McWhood heard the whispers; she looked curiously at the languid invalid in the buggy, then helplessly toward Mayhew, still talking to the Judge. Suddenly the tall, princess-like figure drew itself up. Stella, like one who was finished with an event, marched away from the scene.

Amid the occasional titters of the women and the serene pipe-puffed comments of the men, the groups

would, from time to time, curiously inspect the night-blooming flower. The great white disk was for them witchcraft, miraculous; moreover, it had a slightly immoral tinge, an almost unhallowed significance. Also they had a wondering contempt for old Mr. Loogy as one who frittered away his time evolving so useless and so amazing a wonder. "It don't live more than one night," was told in garrulous disapproval. There was ill-concealed contempt for a flower that was so much trouble and caused so much anxiety; to wither after a single night's blooming; of what use was such a flower?

"It's like a bride, ain't it?" asked Loogy. He hobbled this side and that of the flower, his crooked sticks seeming in the moonlight to raise him above it like a spider on four bent supports. "Ain't it like a bride?" the old fellow inquired meaningly of Mayhew. He saw the irritated look on the young face, the baffled expression that had beheld Stella McWhood, head held high, walking rapidly down the moonlit road alone.

But Mayhew only smiled; he followed the old man, speaking in an undertone.

"I'm going now," he explained; there was a sharp note of worry in his voice. "I must hurry, but I'll be back after they go, *for the flower*. I suppose," he questioned, "that you wouldn't be willing to cut it right away?"

Mr. Loogy studied him. "Don't ye come back," the old man said gruffly; "ye ain't got *no real use for this flower—*"

He dropped his voice, "She ain't goin' to have yer."

The smile died on the young fellow's face. His figure stiffened, but he did not express the hauteur he felt.

"'Tis the *no* flower you'm goin' to get," said Mr. Loogy, trying to joke it off; then he softened, "There, young man, don't take that to heart. I'm an old feller, all wore out; I'm liable to say most anything."

Mayhew stood silent, staring at him.

"There's girls all over," consoled Mr. Loogy, "coming up like dandylions, looking around, taking notice. Stella ain't goin' to have you, boy," reiterated Mr. Loogy. The old gray beard went up in the air as he chewed violently at his friend, the sky. "Them things don't go the way *you* pick out," complained Mr. Loogy to the sky—"do they? No. They don't; they go for the most part the way it picks out."

Mayhew stood there coldly impatient, yet curious, wanting to know more. "If she wasn't a good girl," observed the old man, "why, then—" he paused, "but you'd come to see different anyway." He cackled with good-natured disrespect. "There's sumpin' more to it," he leered, "then just goin' and choosin' pritty gals to set on the table like they was dishes of cherries."

At the impatient step toward him, the ejaculation, the old fellow put out one earth-wizened hand. "Boy," he said solemnly, "boy, I ain't no speechmaker, but I've grafted trees, I've raised orchids, I've sprouted, and I've transplanted. I've cured every kind of blight, and I *know* you can't make *it* come true if it won't come true. Why," said Mr. Loogy, with a comprehensive gesture, "the trees knows it, the potatoes knows it, and they ain't one of them blue lilies along the medders but is trying to tell you so all the time. Hey? You can't make it come true if it won't come true." Then his voice suddenly softened, and it was no longer a squalid

old man who talked. For the moment it was Intelligence; the same fine Intelligence that speaks through a biologist or a chemist spoke now wistfully to Mayhew— "And then we ain't very well instructed," said Mr. Loogy gravely, "and there's fences put up." His own troubled and questioning face tried to read that of the younger man's. "Yes, sir, sometimes when it does come true, there's fences put up. Well—" he looked dumbly, and with a pathetic desire to understand, over the barren mystery of his own past existence.

Mayhew thought suddenly of the artificial flower with "perfum'ry" in its heart.

"Stella, she's a good girl," Loogy mused; "she won't never have you any kind of way, and so if I was you I'd get out; there ain't nothin' into it," concluded Mr. Loogy; "there ain't rilly nothin' into it."

Mayhew stood silent. So still was the youth, so indubitably arrested by the enchanter's vision, the authority in what was said, that Mr. Loogy was moved. He looked kindly and sympathetically at the young fellow. "I ain't sayin' it ain't queer," he admitted largely; "I ain't sayin' it ain't *queer*." In the silver darkness the two men stood looking down the road where Stella McWhood had disappeared. To Mayhew it might have been the road of unfulfillment; to Mr. Loogy it must have looked like a long road of mysterious purpose, for he added very gently, as one conveying a priceless secret to another, "Yer see as it *was*, I ain't never married, myself!"

The groups by the night-blooming cereus were slowly dissolving. Men and women strayed together down the hills or went across fields to scattered farmhouses.

Barella Fayber and her mother rolled solemnly home in the cavern-like buggy, and the Judge's automobile snorted along the highway.

Mr. Loogy, returning to a tall dark figure waiting by the mysterious plant, pointed with thumb over shoulder in the direction young Mayhew had taken.

"Well, now he's gone to find out for himself," he said. "Wouldn't believe what I told him—he's *foolish*. Why, he offered me five dollars for this flower to give it to Stella McWhood."

Tanner Pollen silently proffered his own money, and the old man, in a kind of tender hush as one who performs an operation on a beloved unconscious child, severed the stem of the flower.

He held it out to the young farmer. "You're goin' to give it to her to-night?" he asked waggishly. "You'll have to, without it fades on yer, but she'll be abed when you get down there."

It may have been the moonlight that made the curious lambency in Tanner's dark eyes.

"Her mother will take it to her," he said gravely.

"That girl's terrible 'mauger,'" said old Loogy practically, "but there ain't nothin' the matter with her. She wants more sunlike to wake her up." He looked proudly at his flower, adding, "That's a night-queen you'm takin' to another night-queen. Ain't it? Hey?" He looked curiously at Tanner. "But this here plant has got a lot of buds——"

His hand closed respectfully on the bank-note the other gave him. "Well, ye young horse thief," he demanded facetiously, "do ye pick it off the trees?" Mr. Loogy cackled immoderately. It had been a great day



for him. He held the folded bill between tobaccoey lips. As he shoved his sticks under his armpits and drew out an old red-leather pocketbook in which he deposited his money, his mind still ran on that other offer that had been made to him for his cereus.

"So that young Mayhew, the city feller, tried to buy it off me for five dollars. He's after Stella, but the girl—well, it ain't likely she'll fall in with him. She's a good girl," added Mr. Loogy with empressement. The old man, wise as Merlin, knowing the ugly roots and poisonous shoots of country gossip, now pulled up and cleared away what tangle he could. He put the stamp of his seer's judgment, the austerity of his age, on the country girl's character, for through some strange perceptions of his flower-culture he knew what agony must be hers this night of youth and the moon and a man's straightforward offer and self-impelled frustration. "She's a nice girl," he repeated; "it ain't right she should be lonesome. I'd like," said Mr. Loogy suddenly and recklessly, "to see her married to a feller like you; yes, sir, I wouldn't ask nothin' better."

The old man looked wistfully, inquiringly into Tanner's solemn gaze, but the other shook his head.

By the stone wall of the country road, in the luminous reaches of country moonlight, they stood staring their puzzlement, their sense of finality and of the doubt and insecurity that underlay the silver road of youth and love. Then old Loogy, cackling, gave the younger man a push.

"Ah, go on!" he said. "You goin' to stand here all night? That flower will wilt on you if you don't hurry."

He looked after the powerful form towering its blot

over the moonlit fields toward the farmhouse where with pale lucency Barella's pane still glimmered.

"It's a strange flower," said Mr. Loogy. He turned and looked down that walled road of unfulfillment to where, hidden in trees, was Stella's home. He pictured the girl staring out upon a lonely world, fighting her virgin fight of truth to the voices within her. "It's a strange flower," he sighed. Mr. Loogy gathered up the trellised plant and with effort staggered with it toward the door. He looked lovingly down upon it.

"My, ain't you got a lot of buds?" he muttered; "ain't you got a lot of buds?"

## THE DOLL'S HOUSE \*

By KATHERINE MANSFIELD

WHEN dear old Mrs. Hay went back to town after staying with the Burnells she sent the children a doll's house. It was so big that the carter and Pat carried it into the courtyard, and there it stayed, propped up on two wooden boxes beside the feed-room door. No harm could come to it; it was summer. And perhaps the smell of paint would have gone off by the time it had to be taken in. For, really, the smell of paint coming from that doll's house ("Sweet of old Mrs. Hay, of course; most sweet and generous!")—but the smell of paint was quite enough to make any one seriously ill, in Aunt Beryl's opinion. Even before the sacking was taken off. And when it was. . . .

There stood the doll's house, a dark, oily, spinach green, picked out with bright yellow. Its two solid little chimneys, glued on to the roof, were painted red and white, and the door, gleaming with yellow varnish, was like a little slab of toffee. Four windows, real windows, were divided into panes by a broad streak of green. There was actually a tiny porch, too, painted yellow, with big lumps of congealed paint hanging along the edge.

But perfect, perfect little house! Who could possibly

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mind the smell? It was part of the joy, part of the newness.

"Open it quickly, some one!"

The hook at the side was stuck fast. Pat pried it open with his penknife, and the whole house-front swung back, and—there you were, gazing at one and the same moment into the drawing-room and dining-room, the kitchen and two bedrooms. That is the way for a house to open! Why don't all houses open like that? How much more exciting than peering through the slit of a door into a mean little hall with a hatstand and two umbrellas! That is— isn't it?—what you long to know about a house when you put your hand on the knocker. Perhaps it is the way God opens houses at dead of night when He is taking a quiet turn with an angel. . . .

"O-oh!" The Burnell children sounded as though they were in despair. It was too marvelous; it was too much for them. They had never seen anything like it in their lives. All the rooms were papered. There were pictures on the walls, painted on the paper, with gold frames complete. Red carpet covered all the floors except the kitchen; red plush chairs in the drawing-room, green in the dining-room; tables, beds with real bed-clothes, a cradle, a stove, a dresser with tiny plates and one big jug. But what Kezia liked more than anything, what she liked frightfully, was the lamp. It stood in the middle of the dining-room table, an exquisite little amber lamp with a white globe. It was even filled all ready for lighting, though, of course, you couldn't light it. But there was something inside that looked like oil, and that moved when you shook it.

The father and mother dolls, who sprawled very stiff as though they had fainted in the drawing-room, and their two little children asleep upstairs, were really too big for the doll's house. They didn't look as though they belonged. But the lamp was perfect. It seemed to smile at Kezia, to say, "I live here." The lamp was real.

The Burnell children could hardly walk to school fast enough the next morning. They burned to tell everybody, to describe, to—well—to boast about their doll's house before the school-bell rang.

"I'm to tell," said Isabel, "because I'm the eldest. And you two can join in after. But I'm to tell first."

There was nothing to answer. Isabel was bossy, but she was always right, and Lottie and Kezia knew too well the powers that went with being eldest. They brushed through the thick buttercups at the road edge and said nothing.

"And I'm to choose who's to come and see it first. Mother said I might."

For it had been arranged that while the doll's house stood in the courtyard they might ask the girls at school, two at a time, to come and look. Not to stay to tea, of course, or to come traipsing through the house. But just to stand quietly in the courtyard while Isabel pointed out the beauties, and Lottie and Kezia looked pleased. . . .

But hurry as they might, by the time they had reached the tarred palings of the boys' playground the bell had begun to jangle. They only just had time to whip off their hats and fall into line before the roll was

called. Never mind. Isabel tried to make up for it by looking very important and mysterious and by whispering behind her hand to the girls near her, "Got something to tell you at playtime."

Playtime came and Isabel was surrounded. The girls of her class nearly fought to put their arms round her, to walk away with her, to beam flatteringly, to be her special friend. She held quite a court under the huge pine trees at the side of the playground. Nudging, giggling together, the little girls pressed up close. And the only two who stayed outside the ring were the two who were always outside, the little Kelveys. They knew better than to come anywhere near the Burnells.

For the fact was, the school the Burnell children went to was not at all the kind of place their parents would have chosen if there had been any choice. But there was none. It was the only school for miles. And the consequence was all the children in the neighborhood, the Judge's little girls, the doctor's daughters, the store-keeper's children, the milkman's, were forced to mix together. Not to speak of there being an equal number of rude, rough little boys as well. But the line had to be drawn somewhere. It was drawn at the Kelveys. Many of the children, including the Burnells, were not allowed even to speak to them. They walked past the Kelveys with their heads in the air, and as they set the fashion in all matters of behavior, the Kelveys were shunned by everybody. Even the teacher had a special voice for them, and a special smile for the other children when Lil Kelvey came up to her desk with a bunch of dreadfully common-looking flowers.

They were the daughters of a spry, hard-working



little washerwoman, who went about from house to house by the day. This was awful enough. But where was Mr. Kelvey? Nobody knew for certain. But everybody said he was in prison. So they were the daughters of a washerwoman and a gaolbird. Very nice company for other people's children! And they looked it. Why Mrs. Kelvey made them so conspicuous was hard to understand. The truth was they were dressed in "bits" given to her by the people for whom she worked. Lil, for instance, who was a stout, plain child, with big freckles, came to school in a dress made from a green art-serge table-cloth of the Burnells', with red plush sleeves from the Logans' curtains. Her hat, perched on top of her high forehead, was a grown-up woman's hat, once the property of Miss Lecky, the postmistress. It was turned up at the back and trimmed with a large scarlet quill. What a little guy she looked! It was impossible not to laugh. And her little sister, our Else, wore a long white dress, rather like a nightgown, and a pair of little boy's boots. But whatever our Else wore she would have looked strange. She was a tiny wishbone of a child, with cropped hair and enormous solemn eyes—a little white owl. Nobody had ever seen her smile; she scarcely ever spoke. She went through life holding on to Lil, with a piece of Lil's skirt screwed up in her hand. Where Lil went our Else followed. In the playground, on the road going to and from school, there was Lil marching in front and our Else holding on behind. Only when she wanted anything, or when she was out of breath, our Else gave Lil a tug, a twitch, and Lil stopped and turned round. The Kelveys never failed to understand each other.

Now they hovered at the edge; you couldn't stop them listening. When the little girls turned round and sneered, Lil, as usual, gave her silly, shamefaced smile, but our Else only looked.

And Isabel's voice, so very proud, went on telling. The carpet made a great sensation, but so did the beds with real bedclothes, and the stove with an oven door.

When she finished Kezia broke in. "You've forgotten the lamp, Isabel."

"Oh, yes," said Isabel, "and there's a teeny little lamp, all made of yellow glass, with a white globe that stands on the dining-room table. You couldn't tell it from a real one."

"The lamp's best of all," cried Kezia. She thought Isabel wasn't making half enough of the little lamp. But nobody paid any attention. Isabel was choosing the two who were to come back with them that afternoon and see it. She chose Emmie Cole and Lena Logan. But when the others knew they were all to have a chance, they couldn't be nice enough to Isabel. One by one they put their arms round Isabel's waist and walked her off. They had something to whisper to her, a secret. "Isabel's *my* friend."

Only the little Kelveys moved away forgotten; there was nothing more for them to hear.

Days passed, and as more children saw the doll's house, the fame of it spread. It became the one subject, the rage. The one question was, "Have you seen Burnells' doll's house? Oh, ain't it lovely!" "Haven't you seen it? Oh, I say!"

Even the dinner hour was given up to talking about

it. The little girls sat under the pines eating their thick mutton sandwiches and big slabs of johnny cake spread with butter. While always, as near as they could get, sat the Kelveys, our Else holding on to Lil, listening too, while they chewed their jam sandwiches out of a newspaper soaked with large red blobs. . . .

"Mother," said Kezia, "can't I ask the Kelveys just once?"

"Certainly not, Kezia."

"But why not?"

"Run away, Kezia; you know quite well why not."

At last everybody had seen it except them. On that day the subject rather flagged. It was the dinner-hour. The children stood together under the pine trees, and suddenly, as they looked at the Kelveys eating out of their paper, always by themselves, always listening, they wanted to be horrid to them. Emmie Cole started the whisper.

"Lil Kelvey's going to be a servant when she grows up."

"O-oh, how awful!" said Isabel Burnell, and she made eyes at Emmie.

Emmie swallowed in a very meaning way and nodded to Isabel as she'd seen her mother do on those occasions.

"It's true—it's true—it's true," she said.

Then Lena Logan's little eyes snapped. "Shall I ask her?" she whispered.

"Bet you don't," said Jessie May.

"Pooh, I'm not frightened," said Lena. Suddenly she gave a little squeal and danced in front of the other girls. "Watch! Watch me! Watch me now!" said

Lena. And sliding, gliding, dragging one foot, giggling behind her hand, Lena went over to the Kelveys.

Lil looked up from her dinner. She wrapped the rest quickly away. Our Else stopped chewing. What was coming now?

"Is it true you're going to be a servant when you grow up, Lil Kelvey?" shrilled Lena.

Dead silence. But instead of answering, Lil only gave her silly, shamefaced smile. She didn't seem to mind the question at all. What a sell for Lena! The girls began to titter.

Lena couldn't stand that. She put her hands on her hips; she shot forward. "Yah, yer father's in prison!" she hissed, spitefully.

This was such a marvelous thing to have said that the little girls rushed away in a body, deeply, deeply excited, wild with joy. Some one found a long rope, and they began skipping. And never did they skip so high, run in and out so fast, or do such daring things as on that morning.

In the afternoon Pat called for the Burnell children with the buggy and they drove home. There were visitors. Isabel and Lottie, who liked visitors, went upstairs to change their pinafores. But Kezia thieved out at the back. Nobody was about; she began to swing on the big white gates of the courtyard. Presently, looking along the road, she saw two little dots. They grew bigger, they were coming towards her. Now she could see that one was in front and one close behind. Now she could see that they were the Kelveys. Kezia stopped swinging. She slipped off the gate as if she was going to run away. Then she hesitated. The

Kelveys came nearer, and beside them walked their shadows, very long, stretching right across the road with their heads in the buttercups. Kezia clambered back on the gate; she had made up her mind; she swung out.

"Hullo," she said to the passing Kelveys.

They were so astounded that they stopped. Lil gave her silly smile. Our Else stared.

"You can come and see our doll's house if you want to," said Kezia, and she dragged one toe on the ground. But at that Lil turned red and shook her head quickly.

"Why not?" asked Kezia.

Lil gasped, then she said, "Your ma told our ma you wasn't to speak to us."

"Oh, well," said Kezia. She didn't know what to reply. "It doesn't matter. You can come and see our doll's house all the same. Come on. Nobody's looking."

But Lil shook her head still harder.

"Don't you want to?" asked Kezia.

Suddenly there was a twitch, a tug at Lil's skirt. She turned round. Our Else was looking at her with big, imploring eyes; she was frowning; she wanted to go. For a moment Lil looked at our Else very doubtfully. But then our Else twitched her skirt again. She started forward. Kezia led the way. Like two little stray cats they followed across the courtyard to where the doll's house stood.

"There it is," said Kezia.

There was a pause. Lil breathed loudly, almost snorted; our Else was still as a stone.

"I'll open it for you," said Kezia kindly. She undid the hook and they looked inside.

"There's the drawing-room and the dining-room, and that's the——"

"Kezia!"

Oh, what a start they gave!

"Kezia!"

It was Aunt Beryl's voice. They turned round. At the back door stood Aunt Beryl, staring as if she couldn't believe what she saw.

"How dare you ask the little Kelveys into the courtyard?" said her cold, furious voice. "You know as well as I do, you're not allowed to talk to them. Run away, children, run away at once. And don't come back again," said Aunt Beryl. And she stepped into the yard and shoed them out as if they were chickens.

"Off you go immediately!" she called, cold and proud.

They did not need telling twice. Burning with shame, shrinking together, Lil huddling along like her mother, our Else dazed, somehow they crossed the big courtyard and squeezed through the white gate.

"Wicked, disobedient little girl!" said Aunt Beryl bitterly to Kezia, and she slammed the doll's house to.

The afternoon had been awful. A letter had come from Willie Brent, a terrifying, threatening letter, saying if she did not meet him that evening in Pulman's Bush, he'd come to the front door and ask the reason why! But now that she had frightened those little rats of Kelveys and given Kezia a good scolding, her heart felt lighter. That ghastly pressure was gone. She went back to the house humming.

When the Kelveys were well out of sight of Burnells', they sat down to rest on a big red drain-pipe by the side of the road. Lil's cheeks were still burning; she



took off the hat with the quill and held it on her knee. Dreamily they looked over the hay paddocks, past the creek, to the group of wattles where Logan's cows stood waiting to be milked. What were their thoughts?

Presently our Else nudged up close to her sister. But now she had forgotten the cross lady. She put out a finger and stroked her sister's quill; she smiled her rare smile.

"I seen the little lamp," she said, softly.

Then both were silent once more.

## BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

### WILLIAMS, BEN AMES

Mr. Williams was born in Macon, Mississippi, May 7, 1889. He was educated at Dartmouth College. Until 1916 he was a newspaper writer. Since then he has written a number of stories that deal with outdoor life, with life in the small towns of northern New England, and with the sea. *A Use for Clods* is written in his best and most popular vein. It shows the wholesome perception of that fineness which may lie beneath the most crude exterior. The tang of winter woods, and the flavor of actual adventure pervade the story. Other works of his in the same vein are *All the Brothers Were Valiant*, *Evered*, *The Sea Bride*.

#### A USE FOR CLODS

1. What is the theme of this story? Is it made too evident to be effective? Is the story designed for any special audience?
2. What differences do you note between this story and *The Despoiler*? (Both are distinctively stories of theme.)
3. How do you characterize Mr. Williams' style? Do you like it?
4. Are there any points where the narrative fails to hold your interest?
5. What evidences of close observation of nature do you find?
6. What methods are used in characterization? Are the people individuals or mere types used as symbols?
7. What stories of heroism have you heard that could be built effectively to demonstrate as definite a theme as that of Mr. Williams'?
8. What do you note about the point of view from which the story is narrated?
9. Do you discover any improbabilities? Are they important? Do they add or detract from your enjoyment of the story?

## 338 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

10. Do you discover any significant details such as those in *The Despoiler* that at first seem trivial, but later become important?

11. What criticism favorable or unfavorable would you make of the dialect used in this story?

12. Are the motives which actuate the people clear enough to account for all the incidents of the story?

13. Compare the work of your favorite writer of nature stories with that of the author of this story. What faults or virtues of either become apparent during this comparison?

14. Do you think all nature stories are good for city people?

15. In writing of the outdoor world what sort of vocabulary is most effective? Can you think of any especial phrases which you would try not to use?

16. Did you find any particularly good descriptive words or phrases?

### BAILEY, (IRENE) TEMPLE

Miss Bailey was born in Petersburg, Virginia, and educated at Mrs. English's School in Richmond. She also studied in special courses in colleges. She has written quite largely of girls and for girls; a fact which gives to the heroines of her novels distinctive characters. Nothing she has written surpasses *White Birches* for charm and harmony of style and content. Among her other works are *The Gay Cockade*, *The Trumpeter Swan*, *The Tin Soldier*, and *Adventures in Girlhood*.

#### WHITE BIRCHES

1. What significance has the title?

2. Do you think the beginning strikes the proper keynote for the story? Why, or why not?

3. In what ways might Ridgeley's work have drawn Anne and him nearer together rather than separated them? Was the growing separation as much Ridgeley's fault as it appears on the surface? How do you know Anne could gain and hold a man's attention at will?

4. What significance have the silver beads?

5. What is meant by sentimentalizing over the war?

6. Why do exceedingly practical people sometimes feel that musing upon religious subjects is morbid? Would it be health-

ful for people to spend much of their lives contemplating dying? What aspects of sincere religious interest make for cheerful living?

7. How much of what Christopher says of modern stories is true? Consider this story: It deals with a problem sometimes handled in real life, as well as in fiction, in a sordid way. Why is this not a sordid story? Is fiction that deals with problems that may have sordid aspects of value? How much value in teaching straight thinking has this story?

8. As you look back upon the numerous neighborhood quarrels that took place among the children with whom you have grown up, do you recall any that could have been averted or brought to a sensible conclusion by the application to the problem of the amount of worldly knowledge and poise you now have? Relate such a quarrel, in your version bringing about a satisfying solution, not for the sake of a happy ending, but rather to show how tact and appreciation of relative values may save unhappiness.

9. Why does the author fail to tell you whether or not Anne got well?

10. Has the last sentence any especial significance?

11. What literary qualities has the story? What is its weakest part?

## MORRIS, GOUVERNEUR

Mr. Morris was born February 7, 1876. His great-grandfather was the Revolutionary statesman and senator of the same name. In 1898 he graduated from Yale, where he had been on the staff of the *Yale Literary Magazine* and the *Daily Courant*. While still an undergraduate he published a volume of delightful nonsense verse called "A Bunch of Grapes," for which R. M. Crosby, a classmate, drew the illustrations. Although Mr. Morris has written several successful novels, he is better known as a writer of short stories that touch almost every point of human curiosity from pure fancy to stark reality and are characterized by a forceful yet whimsical style, a subtle humor, and a keen perception of the irony of life. Among his works those most representative are *Tom Beauling*, *Alladin O'Brien*, *Ellen and Mr. Man*, *It and Other Stories*, *The Footprint and Other Stories*, *The Voice in the Rice*, *The Spread Eagle and Other Stories*, *Yellow Men and Gold*, *The*

*Incandescent Lily and Other Stories, and If You Touch Them They Vanish.*

#### THE DESPOILER

1. In what does the romance of this story consist?
2. Why is the ballad given in full, not just referred to?
3. What bearing has Forrest's profession on the plot?
4. How do you account for the natural atmosphere of this story which you must have discovered includes a great mass of material usually thought melodramatic?

5. What do you discover about sentence structure and transitions from this story?

6. Mr. Morris once told an interviewer that as a young writer he lost the first four pages of a story. When he failed to recover them, he found to his surprise that the first sheet of the remainder of the manuscript was a perfectly good beginning; he added that as a consequence he learned to begin his stories after the first four pages. Do you see any evidence in this story that the practice is a good one? Do you notice other omissions that less skillful writers would not have made?

7. What are the pictures that linger in your memory after reading the story? What are some of the descriptive touches that suggest rather than baldly relate?

8. Mr. Morris is an admirer of O. Henry's work, and he was one of the late Richard Harding Davis's friends. Compare with *The Despoiler*, *The Gift of the Magi* and *Van Bibber and the Swan Boats*. Are there any similar touches in style, in use of realistic details, in dialogue, in conclusion?

9. What homely details are used to offset the more exciting material?

10. What are the touches that make each of the characters stand out as an individual?

11. Distinguish here between the use of wit and humor, irony and sarcasm.

12. Though the story has what is called a happy ending, is the keynote of the story easy to define?

13. What purpose do the numbered breaks in the story serve?

14. Select an incident, not one that has to do with the supernatural, that while possible would seem improbable. Safeguard it with probabilities in every way that you can,—and then write it out. If possible, combine with it a theme. How does a theme differ from a "moral"?

## DAVIS, RICHARD HARDING, 1864-1916.

Mr. Davis had a rich literary heritage in the editorial activities of his father, L. Clarke Davis, and the journalistic interests of his mother, Rebecca Harding Davis. He was educated at Lehigh and Johns Hopkins Universities. Friends and critics insisted that Mr. Davis not only wrote romance but lived it. Not only did he travel far and adventurously, but he brought to every experience, however hackneyed, the fresh and eager interest of youth. He chronicled each of the several wars in which he had a part as if it were his first. In somewhat the same zest of youthful high spirits he named his small daughter Hope, for the heroine of his first novel, *Soldiers of Fortune*. Those who have cared greatly for his work like to recall that he was said, even in the days of his greatest facility, to have spent hours perfecting so simple a detail as the description of an automobile turning in at a driveway. The stories of his affectionately eager interest in his friends' children and gardens, his great readiness to be pleased, are no less delightful than those of his cheerful endurance of campaign hardships and the boyish enthusiasm with which he claimed the right to the facts upon which he later based *The Deserter*. Young people enjoy almost all of Mr. Davis's work, but perhaps the most popular are *Cinderella and Other Stories*, *Episodes in Van Bibber's Life*, *Gallegher and Other Stories*, *The Scarlet Car*, *The Red Cross Girl*, *The Lost Road*, *The Boy Scout*, *Some-where in France*.

## VAN BIBBER AND THE SWAN-BOATS

1. The spirit in which this story is told seems so beautifully simple as to make imitation appear deceptively easy. What is different in the attitude of Mr. Davis's hero toward unfortunate people from that of the heroes of most stories in which a rich man or woman befriends poor children? Why do unfortunate but worthy people resent charity? What do you think is the true spirit of charity? Are your ideas at all offended by this story?

2. What details, unobtrusively given, mark the condition of the various characters?

3. Why does Mr. Davis fail to name the young lady who discovered Van Bibber in the midst of his kindness?



## 342 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

4. Do you think the story has any moral? Why are stories with obvious "morals" distasteful?

5. What are the details that mark this not as a "true story" but as a story that could easily be true? What is the difference in the two classes of stories just mentioned? In what ways would this story be different if it had been the exact record of an experience that Mr. Davis had?

6. Do you discover any traits of the author's personal character?

7. What experiences of unusual and almost dream-come-true nature have you known to grow out of the most commonplace beginnings?

8. Do you know what swan-boats are? Have you by any chance ever ridden in the boats on the little lake where this story is laid? From the story and any other sources available can you see any differences between your city parks and Central Park in New York City? Why is Central Park a probable background for the meeting place between Van Bibber and the children from the East Side?

9. What does the story gain by being told objectively?

10. Using an incident as simple as possible, relate it as nearly as possible in Mr. Davis's manner of story telling. What does this effort at imitation teach you about Mr. Davis's art?

11. Do you discover from this story any characteristics of the author that made him greatly sought as a campaign companion?

### PORTER, SYDNEY (O. HENRY), 1862-1910

Many people believe that Sydney Porter was more typical of American life than any other writer of our time except Mark Twain. Since his death a very large amount of material, critical and biographical, has been published about him. Every year a collection of short stories distinguished for their excellence is published under the title *The O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories*.

During his young manhood he was an impecunious journalist in Texas and other parts of the South and Southwest. Later he went to New York, where he wrote his finest stories, many of them dealing with the casual contacts of what most people call humdrum life. He had known poverty and illness as an unknown writer, but he never forgot in his more affluent years

the great mass of people who could not raise themselves from want. One of the famous O. Henry anecdotes relates how the writer set out one day in quest of material for a story and met a tramp who had not eaten for more than a day. In exchange for the tramp's story, Mr. Porter gave him a bill of large denomination, and, later telling of the incident, he said the tramp got his dinner and he got his story.

O. Henry's work is characterized by swiftly moving action, taking place against a background of poignant realism, narrated in informal language which lapses at times into colloquial and slangy diction. His volumes of short stories include *The Four Million*, *Cabbages and Kings*, *Strictly Business*, *The Voice of the City*.

#### THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

1. What claims to literary distinction has this story?
2. What value has the title?
3. Is there any detail in the story that would have been more effective in 1910 than in 1925?
4. Does the story depend upon characterization for the climax?
5. Do you find any novel devices in the way of style or presentation of material?
6. Compare this story with *The Clearest Voice*, which in structure somewhat resembles it. Which is the smoother? The more effective? In which do the people seem to have the clearer motives for their actions?
7. What hints for the writing of dialogue do you learn from Dolly and Jim?
8. If you were to dramatize this as a one-act play for your school assembly what portions of the story would be thrown into the form of dialogue? Why would this story make an effective play?
9. Some of O. Henry's short stories have been put into the movies; what would they lose in this form?
10. Do you find any evidences of the author's first-hand knowledge of poverty in details that you recognize as authentic, but which would hardly occur to a prosperous person?
11. How much emotional appeal has the story? Are the emotional scenes overwritten?
12. From this story can you discover two or three important ways in which O. Henry influenced the American short story?

13. In your walk home from school, in the conversations in the street car, in the conversation at home, pick out five situations that you think would have contained for O. Henry the germ of a story. Write a few sentences of dialogue to present one of the possible incidents growing out of such a situation.

14. In what ways is the author's sense of humor shown? Is it ever allowed to obtrude or become flippant?

### SHERWOOD, MARGARET

Miss Sherwood was born in Ballston, New York, and graduated from Vassar in 1886. She received her Ph.D. from Yale in 1898. Since 1889 she has been connected with the English literature department of Wellesley College, first as instructor and since 1912 as full professor. She has traveled extensively and still found time to write not only several lovely poems, many delightful essays and short stories, but half a dozen novels as well. Fundamental sincerity, clearness of vision, direct and forceful expression, coupled with uncompromising idealism, are the keynotes of her work. In addition to the following list of books, students will find her work in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Good Housekeeping* and other magazines. *An Experiment in Altruism*, *A Puritan Bohemia*, *Henry Worthington*, *Idealist*, *Daphne*, *The Story of King Sylvan* and *Queen Aimée*, *The Princess Pourquoi*, *Whither*, *The Worn Doorstep*, *Familiar Ways*, *A World to Mend*.

### THE CLEAREST VOICE

1. What are the means the author uses to indicate Alice's words without ever telling the reader that Alice spoke?

2. How can a house or a garden or a story speak more compellingly of its creator than the person can speak for himself?

3. In what ways do people project their influences? Can you think of things you do every day or omit to do that are the direct product of other people's influence?

4. What should you say of a personality strong enough to persist as vividly as Alice's after five years of absence?

5. Is the ability to influence others always good? Why do many people wish to influence their friends, their neighbors, their countrymen? What methods do they use?

6. Do you think Alice was the type of person who wishes to

control the actions of others just as a lust for power? Do you think she knew how strong her influence could be?

7. How are you made aware of the very attitudes in which the family group sat about the room? In times of emotional stress why is a chance gesture important?

8. What references to facial expression made here could you corroborate from your own experience?

9. In what does the plot consist?

10. What observations of family life have you made that would coincide with those made in this story by Miss Sherwood?

11. Why is the small boy introduced in person?

12. Compare the ending with that of *The Gift of the Magi*.

13. What power of narration do you note? What truths that are valuable to successful living?

### STANLEY, MARY VALENTINE (MRS.)

Mrs. Stanley's published stories are not so numerous as readers wish, but her very busy life devoted to her nieces and nephews perhaps in part explains this scarcity. She has been living for several years in Austria, where she found the material for the story reprinted here, and for *Christine and the Princess*.

#### THE OLD PEARL NECKLACE

1. What are the details that mark the author as an eye-witness of post-war conditions in Vienna?

2. What dramatic value has the fact that Joseph was a Jew?

3. What are Madeline's dominating traits?

4. What are the characteristics of the Princess?

5. Who were the Archduke and Duchess mentioned here?

6. Is it true that American money saved Austria? If so, why shouldn't Madeline, as a matter of patriotism, enlarge upon the fact?

7. What were the things for which the old-time Vienna was famous?

8. Why is not Madeline's disregard of the great and famous who had visited the Princess a mark of her true democracy?

9. What methods are used here in presenting local color?

## 346 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

10. What reminds the Princess of her treasured servant when Madeline first asks to see the pearls?

11. Why does she insist upon waiting before she shows the necklace?

12. What methods are used in characterization?

13. In what does the clash of the forces of the plot consist?

14. How do you characterize Mrs. Stanley's style?

15. Are there any points where the power of narration fails?

### BROWN, KATHARINE HOLLAND

Miss Brown was born in Alton, Illinois, not far from Quincy, where she now makes her home. She was educated in Washington and at the University of Michigan, where she was elected to the honorary society of Phi Beta Kappa. For young people the especial charm of her stories lies in the entire absence of condescension in her characterization of youth. Her faculty of presenting the essentials of fine and homely living is no more convincing than her eye for those romantic details which enrich the commonplace. Stories which involve some of the characters in *Those Scars* may be found in back numbers of *Scribner's* and *The Woman's Home Companion*. Among Miss Brown's books those of particular interest to young people are: *Philippa at Halcyon*, *The Uncertain Irene*, and *The Hallowell Partnership*.

### THOSE SCARS

1. What details do you notice that would be important considerations for an old lady? Are there any traits of Mrs. Wentworth's that remind you of your own grandmother?

2. How are you first made aware of the importance of Mrs. Wentworth's hands?

3. What do you think of Barbara?

4. What are the human endearing traits that bound this family together?

5. How do you know that Mrs. Wentworth was a woman of unusual power and charm?

6. How much are you able to discover about Charles Edward, Peter, Gwen, and Frederick?

7. Why could Barbara never forgive herself?

8. What purpose does Eliza serve in the story?
9. Was it cruel of Mrs. Wentworth's children to insist that she dress in beautiful clothes?
10. Why was it Barbara and not Norton who felt responsible for the scars on Mrs. Wentworth's hands?
11. What evidences do you find of Miss Brown's insight into the motives and actions of young people?
12. At what point might the story easily become sentimental?
13. What part of it do you consider the most successful?
14. Try relating an episode taken from real life in which you impersonate either a very young child or a person at least thirty years older than yourself. Bear in mind in either case that the points that appeal to you yourself as a person of sixteen to twenty will not be the important ones to the person of four or sixty. What special interests has each of these ages that you cannot share enthusiastically?
15. What literary qualities has this story? Are there any which it lacks?

### TARKINGTON, (NEWTON) BOOTH

Mr. Tarkington was born in 1869. He was educated at Exeter Academy, and at Purdue and Princeton. He is one of the few American authors of the present day who has had no other occupation than that of letters. Twice he has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best American novel of the year; once for *The Magnificent Ambersons* and once for *Alice Adams*. Like *Renfrew and the New Generation* a large number of his short stories deal with the distinctly humorous aspects of youth; as a novelist his work is concerned with simple, kindly people in typically American communities, involved in the pleasures and perplexities which grow naturally from their characters or environments. His humor is never caustic; his point of view is always sane and well-balanced; his interpretation of life penetrating but optimistic. The long list of his novels and plays, from *The Gentleman from Indiana* to *Gentle Julia* and *The Midlander*, contains little that is not of interest to young people.

### RENFREW AND THE NEW GENERATION

1. What traits of young people is Mr. Tarkington satirizing?



## 348 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

Do you think most girls of Muriel's age have any of her characteristics?

2. Do you find any shrewd comments on human nature?
3. In what way is the realism of Mr. Tarkington's dialogue different from that of O. Henry? Is the difference due to the subject matter, to a keener or less keen observation of life, or to the different purposes of the two authors?
4. In what does Mr. Tarkington's sense of humor consist?
5. Listen carefully to the arguments you hear in the next few days and see whether you can identify in them dialogue similar to that between Muriel and her mother.
6. Which character in the story is best drawn?
7. How much importance has the plot? What do you discover about the plot upon a second or third reading that entirely escaped you at the first? Is so natural a sequence of events a mark of good craftsmanship, or does it occur as a product of using a little material to do duty for a long story?
8. Do you receive any new ideas from this story?
9. From this and any other stories of Mr. Tarkington's can you explain not only his great popularity but the high place quite generally conceded to him in the world of letters?
10. Is there anything in this story that strikes you as distinctively American?
11. What means of indicating emotion are used here? What different emotions are suggested?
12. Do you see evidences of Mr. Tarkington's ability as a playwright?

### YEZIERSKA, ANZIA

Few people have had more eventful lives than Miss Yezierska, who was born in Russia, emigrated to this country, and educated herself at the same time that she was earning her living in factories and in the kitchens of private families. Something of the tremendous urge and courage that enabled Miss Yezierska to achieve an education and a coveted position in the field of letters is reflected in the strong sweep of action and surge of emotion which characterize her work. *Hungry Hearts* and *Salome of the Tenements* will both appeal to young people.

## THE FAT OF THE LAND

1. What do you think of the use of dialect in this story?
2. Why is superstition emphasized?
3. Was Hanneh a good mother?
4. What traits of hers were the result of the privations which her ancestors had suffered?
5. What traits of hers inherited by her children contributed to their success?
6. What effect did poverty have on Hanneh? Prosperity? Was Hanneh always sincere in her attitude toward prosperity?
7. What purpose does Mrs. Pelz serve?
8. How does Fanny's attitude toward her mother compare with Hanneh's toward her children in their youth?
9. What details make this story of immigrants vividly true?
10. Do you know of immigrants who, like Hanneh's children, have succeeded largely? Do you account for such successes as Hanneh did?
11. In comparing these characters with those in *Humoresque* what differences do you note?
12. In what does the irony of this story consist?
13. Could a story with such a character as Hanneh for its heroine be true in the artistic sense if it had a happy ending? Why?
14. What do you think Hanneh really wanted of life?
15. Plan a story and write at least the opening, climactic, and closing scenes in which the chief character tries to attain some constantly changing ideal.
16. Can you decide from reading *The Fat of the Land* why emotions ought to be controlled? What are some of the consequences of an uncontrolled nature like Hanneh's?
17. Can you understand why Hanneh was disappointed in America?
18. Why is the contentment and comfort of immigrants important to all Americans?
19. What can the Slavic races teach America?

BACON, JOSEPHINE DASKAM (MRS. SELDEN  
BACON)

Mrs. Bacon was born in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1876, and graduated from Smith College in 1898. Hers was the unusually

## 350 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

happy experience of never having a story rejected. Some of this too-good-to-be-true glamor invests each tale of hers, particularly those like *The Biography of a Boy, On Our Hill*, and *The Memoirs of a Baby*, which deal with child life. She has, moreover, in unusual degree the gift for direct and forceful narrative sharpened by significant details and keen wit. *The Little Silver Heart* illustrates her power to deal with the supernatural in a convincing fashion. Those of her books that most appeal to young people are: *Smith College Stories*, *While Caroline Was Growing*, *To-day's Daughter*, *Ten to Seventeen*, and *The Madness of Philip*.

### THE LITTLE SILVER HEART

1. What plot value has Gran'ma Biggs?
2. Why does the narrator take pains to insist that Connie has very nearly forgotten some of the most important parts of the strange event?
3. What well-known superstitions are made use of here?
4. Does the author suggest any explanation other than a supernatural one?
5. What habits of little girls are used as a means of giving reality to the story?
6. What plot value has Josie?
7. How is suspense secured?
8. Discover all the instances of foreshadowing that occur.
9. What evidence have you that the author uses a very young person as the narrator of the story? What are her reasons for using this device?
10. As a child, did you ever pretend something to yourself so vividly that suddenly your imagination seemed to run away with you and project the events in your mind objectively?
11. Did you as a child have as a companion a person who was the product of your imagination? What resemblances to this companion do you see in Lorilla?
12. After Connie insists that she has seen Lorilla, why do Mrs. Annie and Aunt Betsy stand about and look at her and fail to pet her as she thinks would be natural?
13. What plot value has old Nig?
14. What touches of deft characterization do you note?
15. Do you think this story depends in any degree upon the locality in which it is laid?
16. Does it depend upon any special traits of character?

17. Why do the narrator and Connie herself lay so much stress upon her sore throat?

18. What kind of little girl was Connie?

19. What do you notice about the arrangement of events in this story?

20. From the number of stories that you will be able to discover in your family or neighborhood which seem to depend upon the supernatural select one and relate it so that the climax will occur as near the end as possible. In every possible way, without definitely making the statement, suggest both the supernatural and the logical explanation. Be sure that you give your ghost or uncanny event a logical motive for whatever action it takes.

### HURST, FANNIE

Miss Hurst was born in St. Louis, October 19, 1889. She received the degree of B.A. from Washington University in 1909, and in 1910 and 1911 she studied in post-graduate courses at Columbia University. In 1915 she married Jacques S. Danielson. First-hand study of the stage, of the shopgirl, and of steerage conditions has given her an eventful life. *Humoresque* is typical of Miss Hurst's work in its wealth of colorful detail, its emotional stress, its rapid march of events, and above all in its faithful delineation of Jewish types. In addition to the following collections of short stories, *Just Around the Corner*, *Every Soul Has Its Song*, *Gaslight Sonatas*, *Humoresque*, *The Vertical City*, she has written two novels, *Star Dust* and *Lummox*.

### HUMORESQUE

1. What characters furnish the necessary background of the story?

2. What characters are necessary to the plot?

3. How does the complicating situation grow out of character rather than out of incident?

4. To what extent is a special background necessary for the story?

5. What details does the author furnish that make it seem intensely real?

6. What touches does the author use to idealize her characters?

## 352 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

7. What are the chief emotional appeals?
8. To what extent is the story timely rather than permanent in appeal?
9. What tricks of style does the author employ? Which of these are common to present-day writers, which original, so far as you can judge, with Miss Hurst?
10. Write introductions for several stories that will depend for their chief interest upon a special type of character. What different phraseology shall you use in introducing a story about a messenger boy, an old lady, a baseball player, a matinée idol, a dutiful and somewhat abused daughter, and a retired farmer?
11. In the stories planned above shall you need to describe the features of the chief characters? In which of the stories will other physical details be more important? In each story what popular opinions or beliefs can you confirm or disprove? What actual events can you use to make the story realistic? Write a dialogue to explain each of the following situations: A real estate agent selling a lot of land to an aged couple who have saved nearly a lifetime to own their own home. A district nurse trying to persuade a mother to send her crippled child to a hospital clinic. A teacher trying to persuade a pupil to remain in a course in which he is failing rather than to leave it. A girl trying to persuade her father to increase her allowance.

### FISHER, DOROTHY CANFIELD

Mrs. Fisher, who was born at Lawrence, Kansas, acquired several languages as a child and has put at least two of them to interesting use. Her French stood her in excellent stead during three years of war work in France; and her Italian made possible the beautiful translation of Papini's *Life of Christ*. Besides her many short stories, she has written several novels, among them *The Squirrel Cage*, *The Bent Twig*, and *The Homemaker*.

#### AS A BIRD OUT OF THE SNARE

1. What ideals of fine living do you find in this story?
2. What seems to you to be the chief appeal of this story?
3. To what degree did Jehiel attain his desire?
4. What do you suppose was the effect of Jehiel's sacrifice upon Natty?

5. Can you think of the most important reasons why people should be taught to practice and respect sacrifices?
6. New England people of Jehiel's type are often called cold and unemotional. From your study of this story refute or confirm this criticism.
7. To what extent do you consider this a story of local color?
8. If you are familiar with Mrs. Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's stories, contrast her attitude toward New England life with that of Dorothy Canfield, as seen in this story.
9. What is Jehiel's attitude toward the locality in which he lived? Do you think many people for a time at least experience a similar attitude?
10. You know of course what snare Jehiel wished to be delivered from; what snare do you think the author refers to in the title?
11. Can you explain the symbolism that Jehiel saw in the pine tree?
12. Do you think of any other symbolism the tree might have for the reader?
13. What is your present definition of personal freedom? In what ways has it changed since you were seven or eight years old? Can you think of any ways in which it may change as you grow older?
14. In what did Jehiel's ordinary interests consist?
15. Do you call the ending of this story happy or unhappy?
16. Would Jehiel have been happy if he had been able to follow up his desires?
17. What conclusions have you come to in regard to Dorothy Canfield's style?
18. Do you see any evidences of the author's familiarity with French life and literature?
19. Try to write a very simple narrative in which a character apparently thwarted nevertheless attains in an indirect way his real desire. You will need to think very carefully and write very simply. You must make the apparent contradiction clear to the reader. You must completely satisfy the reader and partially satisfy your hero. You will probably be rather disappointed in your story, but you will have learned a number of valuable steps in story telling. Such work will make you appreciate more fully the fine craftsmanship of such a story as this one of Mrs. Fisher's.



## FITZGERALD, F(RANCIS) SCOTT (KEY)

Mr. Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, September 24, 1896. He left Princeton in 1917 to join the army. His first book, *This Side of Paradise*, startled critics by its originality. That Mr. Fitzgerald possesses serious literary ability, as well as a gift for the bizarre, is seen in such work as the story here reprinted, *Two for a Cent*, which combines pleasing readability with a perception of the perversity of fate and an ability to characterize aptly people of opposing temperament. Moreover, there is here preserved a nice balance between content and form. Mr. Fitzgerald is a frequent contributor to *The Metropolitan Magazine*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Hearst's*, and other popular periodicals.

## TWO FOR A CENT

1. Why do you think Edward O'Brien reprinted this story as one of the best published in 1922?
2. What devices are used to heighten the suspense?
3. To what extent is the story dependent upon locality? Upon character?
4. In comparing this story with *The Strange Flower* and *The Doll's House*, what impressions of relative completeness do you get?
5. What is the plot?
6. What gives you the feeling of a driving force pushing to its inevitable conclusion?
7. What plot purpose does the title serve?
8. Are there any marks of great originality in style or technique?
9. What phrases do you note that contribute to the noticeable harmony here in content and form?
10. Why is much of the story told by the characters themselves instead of by the author?
11. What are the difficult problems from a literary standpoint in presenting this story?
12. Why was the story worth telling? Are either or both the chief characters attractive?
13. Why is Abercrombie troubled that his leaving the South was accidental?

14. Did you ever receive credit for a deed that so far as you can determine was accidental on your part?

15. Why would it have been in bad taste for Mr. Fitzgerald to point out in the conclusion that Hemmick, by staying in the South, had really enjoyed rich spiritual rewards which were perhaps denied the man who was prosperous?

### KIPLING, RUDYARD

Mr. Kipling was born in 1865 in India and in his early stories drew largely upon the background familiar to him as a boy and youth. Although the fantastic and mysterious often tinge his work, he is better known as a teller of tales of action and manly virtues in situations often primitive. His own writing crackles with the energy of a mind that believes inherently in the gospel of hard work. As traveler, correspondent, explorer for new interests, his life has touched most of the pursuits which color our times, and from this wealth of experience and observation he has given us such stories as *Captains Courageous*, *The Maltese Cat*, *The Ship that Found Herself*, *Number .007*, and finally perhaps the finest story of whimsy ever written, *The Brushwood Boy*.

### MOTI GUJ—MUTINEER

1. Coir swab is a swab made from the outer husk of the cocoanut. Arrack is the name in India assigned to any very strong liquor.

2. This story, like the ones by O. Henry and Richard Harding Davis, seems very simple. Can you point out the elements that make it an unusually fine piece of literature?

3. Why do not the habits of Deesa appear revolting? What similarities do you discover between Moti Guj and Deesa? Under what circumstances do we ordinarily absolve a man from responsibility for his own acts? Why after all is the question of Deesa's habits not important to this story?

4. Do you think less or more highly of the intelligence of elephants after reading this story?

5. What value is there for human beings in the close association with animals?

6. Do you agree with the man who said that desire for flattery was the chief motive of those who own dogs?

## 356 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

7. What details of Indian life are necessary to this story?
8. What power in narration or description do you find here?
9. Can you discover what tricks of sentence or paragraph building contribute to the impression of sureness and force in Kipling's style?
10. To what extent is this a story of plot?
11. Many stories misrepresent animals, assigning to them emotions and ideas far beyond their capacity. In writing a story of an animal you have known and understood and perhaps loved, try to preserve a sensible balance between what you might like to believe were the feelings of the animal and what your judgment tells you the animal's real capacity was. You will not need to exaggerate or falsify if you are really fond of animals, because you will know that their use of their limited intelligence is often quite as remarkable as the impossible reasoning sometimes assigned to them. Try to make the animal real, try to present his real personality, his faults as well as his virtues.
12. What are the elements of humor in this story?

### BABCOCK, EDWINA STANTON

This author says of herself: "I was born in Nyack, N. Y., but like to live most of the time in Nantucket, Mass. I love children, mountains, and sea, and dislike fish bones, earrings, and chain letters. I am rather idealistic and unsophisticated. My idea of myself is an effervescent soul who had a superb father and a blessed mother and ten brothers and sisters. I wrote before I was born, shall go on writing all my life, and shall write after I am dead—I hope."

### THE STRANGE FLOWER

1. How does the plant form a tie among all the various people in the story?
2. What details showing careful observation do you note in the descriptions? What phrases that are satisfying do you recall?
3. Why would not Stella marry Mayhew?
4. What made Barella enjoy her own weakness? Do you know of instances where people have used their own weakness to control others?

5. Why did the Judge, Mayhew, Tanner Pollen, Stella, and Barella each want the flower?

6. What is the Judge's attitude toward Mr. Loogy? Mr. Loogy's toward him?

7. To what extent is the story dependent upon a special environment? What do you learn indirectly about manners, level of intelligence, and interests in this community?

8. What does it mean to behold "life through hypothetical miles of pink ribbon"?

9. How do you explain the apparent paradox in "the children ceased their shoutings, appeased by the ecstasy of having in fancy been 'skinned alive' "?

10. What hints of symbolism do you find in the story aside from the flower?

11. Look up the night-blooming cereus; the dictionary or a dealer's catalog will give you a good description of it. What suggestions of mystery do you find in its habits?

12. What evidence of tolerance do you find in the author's presentation of characters?

13. In what aspect of short-story technique does the greatest interest center here?

### MANSFIELD, KATHERINE (MRS. J. MIDDLETON MURRY) 1890-1923

Mrs. Murry's brief career was characterized by high regard for the standards of excellence which she set up as her goal. She gained recognition first as a brilliant critic and then as an artist of unusual originality and undeviating sincerity. After a long sickness, during which she insisted upon working in her usual exhausting fashion, she died at Fontainebleau in January, 1923. Students will at first be a trifle abashed by the frankness with which she lays bare many of the artifices which grown people commonly like to think deceive children, but they will grow to relish with great delight her shrewd and unrestrained truthfulness. What this young woman had observed about life she thought was worth recording only if she exhibited exactly what she had learned and what connection apparently unrelated events had with one another. Much of her story here reprinted is told in indirect discourse as if the thoughts of first one member of the group and then another were presented. John Galsworthy says of her, "Her work . . .

## 358 BIOGRAPHIES AND QUESTIONS

is all an expression of a mood in love with life." Pupils who enjoy this story may care to read others in the volumes, *The Garden Party*, *Bliss*, and *The Dove's Nest*.

### THE DOLL'S HOUSE

1. What was the reason that the parents gave their children for avoiding the Kelveys? What do you think was the real reason? Is it best to be frank with children? What are the dangers of telling children the literal truth?

2. Compare the actions of the children on the day that Lena tormented the Kelveys with those of the children in *The Strange Flower*. What is the real pleasure children find in cruelty? Who besides the children in this story employs cruelty for a special end? Do you think there is any implication hinted at that the children in this respect were only imitating conduct of their elders, more subtle but quite as definitely determined upon?

3. To what extent is symbolism used in this story? Compare *The Strange Flower* with it. What differences in the use of analogy and symbolism do you find in the two?

4. How do you explain the great popularity that Katherine Mansfield had? Have you any reason to think that her stories would appeal more to young people and educated people than to middle-aged people or to people of little education?

5. What takes the place of plot construction?

6. Compare the realism of this story with that in *Van Bibber and the Swan-Boats*.

7. Try to narrate, from the points of view of the several people involved, an argument that finally descends to the level of personal recrimination. Use very little dialogue. Suggest the attitudes, much of the conversation and all of the prejudices by indirect discourse. No one in an argument likes to admit his reasons are based on prejudice; he will therefore put into speech logical premises for his point of view. Try to indicate the prejudices that your characters suppress.

8. What aspects of the story appear unfinished to you? Is this another evidence of Katherine Mansfield's refusal to accept conventions as such? Is real life ever finished? What makes a story seem finished? Could all literary traditions be questioned and ignored in the same way?

9. What other title could you suggest for this story?

10. Do you find any ideas that you are conscious of having dimly perceived before, but which you now grasp clearly?

11. Is frankness in letters like frankness among people limited by that indefinite standard known as good taste? Is it good or dangerous for every one to be made to think truthfully and fearlessly? Can you think of drawbacks?

12. Is misrepresenting motives in fiction as serious as misrepresenting motives in life?

13. As you begin to think in a seriously critical way of fiction, what are your personal reactions to the authors who distort life to make it appear cheerful, happy, and prosperous no matter what occurs, as compared with those who strive to present what they have seen with a regard for cause and effect? What harm do so-called wholesome books (those which have no other virtue to recommend them) often do young people?

14. James Harvey Robinson often asks his audience if there is any subject on which they are afraid to think. An educated person he believes is never afraid that seeking truth will bring him to a position where he is intellectually afraid. Why is intellectual and artistic courage as necessary to the race as physical courage? Why is it often as heroic to exhibit it?



## LIST OF SHORT STORIES

This list is intended to be used at the teacher's discretion for supplementary reading. It aims to supply varied types of stories from authors of diverse interests and abilities. The characterizations in some cases will seem somewhat inadequate because of the difficulty of briefly summarizing a group of widely differing tales.

ABBOTT, ELEANOR. *The Sick-a-Bed Lady*. Light, amusing, with the author's well-known nervous use of adjectives.

ABDULLAH, ACHMED. *The Honorable Gentleman*. Colorful stories of New York's Chinatown.

ANDERSON, SHERWOOD. *Winesburg, Ohio*. Tales of a small town. Most of the characters are somewhat warped.

ANDREWS, MARY RAYMOND SHIPMOND. *The Eternal Masculine*. As the title suggests, these are stories about men and boys, but girls will like them, too.

*His Soul Goes Marching On*. A story of Roosevelt printed as a separate thin volume.

*Yellow Butterflies*. A story of the unknown soldier. Printed as above.

*The Perfect Tribute*. A story of Lincoln. Printed as above.

✓ *The Courage of the Commonplace*. A story of action. Printed as above.

*The Three Things*. A story of the World War. Printed as above.

*The Eternal Feminine*. Stories of girls.

ATKEY, BERTRAM. *Winnie O'Wynn and the Wolves*. Stories of superficial cleverness.

AUMONIER, STACY. *Golden Windmill*. Stories of various types of people, told with gentle irony.

*Miss Bracegirdle*. Stories peopled with somewhat shoddy, but interesting, characters.

BACON, JOSEPHINE DASKAM. *Square Peggy*. Stories of girls who are striving to adjust their individual problems successfully.

*Blind Cupid*. Improbable love stories made pleasantly convincing.

*Ten to Seventeen*. Girls in a boarding school keep a diary in which they chronicle their pranks and experiments.

BAILEY, TEMPLE. *Gay Cockade*. Pleasant and diverting love stories.

BEACH, REX. *The Crimson Gardenia*. Tales of adventure.

*Laughing Bill Hyde*. Alaska and business.

BEAUMONT, GERALD. *Riders Up*. Tales of the turf.

✓ BENCHLY, ROBERT CHARLES. *Love Conquers All*. Farcical stories.

✓ BERCOVICI, KONRAD. *Crimes of Charity*. Showing how charity might assist in the degradation of character.

*Dust of New York*. Studies of life in New York's various foreign quarters.

✓ BIBESCO, PRINCESS ELIZABETH. *I Have Only Myself to Blame*. Very brief and sophisticated stories of modern life.

✓ BIERCE, AMBROSE. *Can Such Things Be?* Dealing with the supernatural, ghostly, and mysterious.

BLACKWOOD, ALGERNON. *Day and Night Stories*. Fifteen stories of mysticism.

BOTTOMÉ, PHYLLIS. *Derelect*. Grim for the most part, lightened by flashes of humor.

BROWN, ALICE. *Country Neighbors*. Simple neighborliness with a New England background.

*Flying Teuton*. Stories of power and charm with strongly accented spiritual and moral values.

✓ *Vanishing Points*. Stories that show a sympathetic understanding of life.

BRUBAKER, HOWARD. *Ranny, Otherwise Randolph Harrington Dukes*. Stories of an eight-year-old.

BURKE, THOMAS. *Limchouse Nights*. London's Chinatown.

*More Limehouse Nights*. Same type of stories as above.

BURT, MAXWELL STRUTHERS. *John O'May*. Seven stories of unusual people in unusual places.

- ✓ CANFIELD, DOROTHY. *Hillsboro People*. Fifteen stories of quiet country life.  
*Raw Material*. Narrative sketches of New England types.
- CATHER, WILLA S. *Youth and the Bright Medusa*. Youth and art.
- CLEMENS, SAMUEL L. (Mark Twain). *Jumping Frog*. Humorous tales.  
*Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*. Humorous tales.
- COBB, IRVIN S. *Back Home*. Stories that show Kentucky as it really was rather than as it has been portrayed in romantic novels.  
*Old Judge Priest*. Similar to above.  
*Escape of Mr. Trimm*. Grim stories of realism.  
*Life of the Party*. Humorous tale.  
*Snake Doctor*. Grim and ironical.
- COHEN, OCTAVUS ROY. *Polished Ebony*. Humorous treatment of city negro types.
- CONNELLY, JAMES B. *Head Winds*. Sea and adventure.  
*Tide Rips*. Similar to above.
- CONRAD, JOSEPH. *Within the Tides*. Horror and atmosphere.
- CRABBE, ARTHUR. *Samuel Lyle, Criminologist*. Mystery.
- CUTTING, MARY STEWART. *Refractory Husbands*. Delightfully simple and delicately humorous stories of daily life.  
*Some of Us Are Married*. See above.
- DAVIS, RICHARD HARDING. *The Lost Road*. Breezily told tales.  
*Somewhere in France*. One war story and five others, all well told.
- ✓ *The Boy Scout*. Stories for boys.
- DELAND, MARGARET. *Around Old Chester*. Seven leisurely stories.
- ✓ DOYLE, SIR ARTHUR CONAN. *His Last Bow*. Mystery stories.
- DREISER, THEODORE. *Free*. Collection uneven in execution.  
*Twelve Men*. Detailed studies of types.
- DUNCAN, NORMAN. *Battles Royal Down North*. Stories laid in Labrador.  
*Harbor Battles Down North*. See above.

- DUNSANY, LORD. *Dreamer's Tales*. Twenty-eight exquisite tales of wonders.
- EVANS, CARADOC. *My Neighbors*. Welsh dialect.
- FERBER, EDNA. *Cheerful—By Request*. Stories rich in both pathos and humor.  
*Emma McChesney and Co*. Modern independent woman in business.  
*Half Portions*. Realism slightly flavored with imagination.
- FITZGERALD, F. SCOTT. *Flappers and Philosophers*. Readable tales of bizarre youth.  
*Tales of the Jazz Age*. See above.
- FREEMAN, MARY E. WILKINS. *New England Nun*. Homely tales of New England men and women.
- GALE, ZONA. *Friendship Village*. Simple village life keenly observed.
- GALSWORTHY, JOHN. *Five Tales*. Character studies exquisitely drawn.  
*Captures*. All walks in life delicately analyzed.
- GEROULD, KATHERINE FULLERTON. *Great Tradition*. Stories of married life.
- GLASS, MONTAGUE. *Potash and Perlmutter*. Stories of humor in Jewish dialect.
- GLASGOW, ELLEN. *Shadowy Third*. Mysticism.
- HARDY, THOMAS. *Changed Man*. Human nature keenly observed.
- HENRY, O. *Four Million*. Stories of surprise and humor.  
*The Voice of the City*. See above.  
*Sixes and Sevens*. See above.
- HERGESHEIMER, JOSEPH. *Gold and Iron*. Five stories of the past dealing with men and women no longer young.  
*The Happy End*. Wide range of subjects brilliantly and vividly treated.
- HUGHES, RUPERT. *A Little Town*. Stories of a village near the Mississippi.  
*Long Ever Ago*. Ten stories of traditional Irish characters against a New York setting.
- HURST, FANNIE. *Every Soul Has Its Song*. Humbler types of city characters.

*Gaslight Sonatas*. Somewhat melodramatic, but human and interesting.

*Humoresque*. Eight stories of various city types.

JORDAN, ELIZABETH. *Lovers' Knots*. Rather simple stories prettily told.

KIPLING, RUDYARD. *The Day's Work*. Contains many types of stories, considerable action, some fantasy.

*Stalky and Company*. Boys at school.

LOCKE, WILLIAM J. *Far Away Stories*. Simple, friendly pre-war tales.

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*Garden Party*. Similar to above.

*Dove's Nest*. Some of these stories are incomplete.

*Little Girl*. Some of these stories are incomplete.

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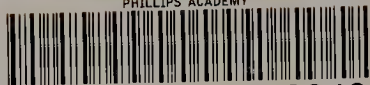
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